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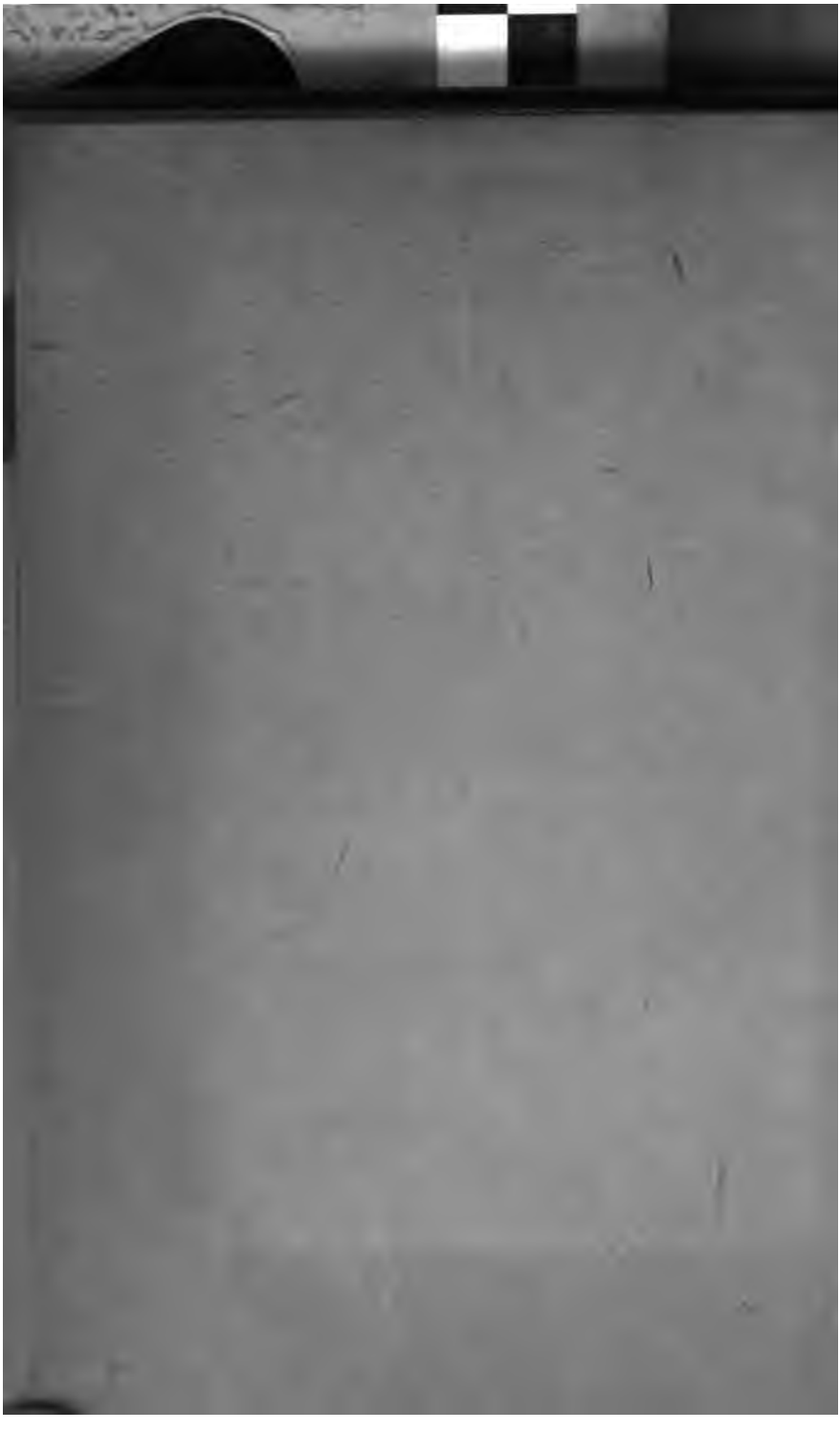
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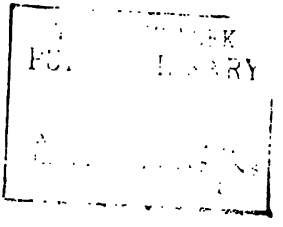
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NCB







SHAKESPEARE'S TOMB IN THE CHURCH AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

"Good frend for Iesvs sake forbeare
To digg the dvst encloased heare
Bleste be ye man yt spares thes stones
And cvrst be he yt moves my bones."

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

It is no light matter to present within five hundred and fifty pages the story of the imaginative life of a nation as found in its literature. No one can hope for absolute success in such a task. The excuse for adding to the already long list of histories of English literature is that the subject is inexhaustible. The point of view of each new narrator must bring into relief fresh aspects of the great story, and suggest, at least in detail, new lines of approach for the student.

This book aims, like all modern text-books, not to supplant, but to accompany the direct and copious reading of texts. The Suggestions for Class Work and for Talks from the Teacher are not merely theoretical; they may in some cases appear at first too advanced, but they have been well tested in a practical experience of over ten years in the class-room. Their application in detail will of course depend on the grade of the class. If the teacher of literature is not prepared to give certain lectures, a teacher of history or of art in the same school may well be asked to do so. Occasional interchange of appointments among the different departments is indeed a very salutary thing; it checks the student's often inveterate instinct to hold different forms of national or individual expression in distinct water-tight com-

partments of his mind, as if they had nothing to do with one another.

No attempt has been made to outline work for the advanced scholar of college or university. On the other hand, the book is beyond the scope of elementary schools. It seeks to meet the needs of the high school and of the younger classes in college.

Any short history of literature must of course proceed on a strictly selective principle. Many interesting people and sundry not unimportant phases of literary development must remain unnoticed. The method here chosen has been to present a fairly full outline of authors, their works, and contemporary events in Tables arranged for easy reference, and, so far as possible, to disencumber the text of details which the young student is sure to forget. Each part of the book opens with a brief chapter of general statements, picturing the period to be treated, or describing its characteristics; this has been done in the belief that a few sound introductory generalizations help to start the student right in his personal inductive study of any period. Emphasis is placed on the greatest or most significant figures, to each of whom a chapter, or a long section in a chapter, has been allotted. Authors of secondary importance, however fascinating, have been relegated to the background, and grouped to illustrate the characteristics of their periods. The time for close and loving study of figures less than the greatest will come later; but the young student needs to gain first a sense of the great movements of national life as expressed in literature, and a clear picture of the Masters. Perspective has to be carefully considered

if these ends are to be attained. Too many facts concerning authors not to be known at first hand simply dull the mind.

More stress has been placed than is customary in books of this kind on the period before Chaucer. This is in accord with the modern tendency which is bringing into ever clearer light the significance of our origins and the imaginative achievement of the great mediæval centuries, and is recognizing more and more that some knowledge of these things is essential to a right understanding of English literature.

If specific references to history are few in these pages, it is because the study of literature and of history should always go on side by side, and no one book can treat both subjects. Literature bears only indirect relation, however, to dynasties and wars, while it bears direct relation to that life of the whole people whence it proceeds. This life, in its varying manifestations and in its onward movement, the book tries constantly to suggest to the student's consciousness. Instead of enumerating a series of unconnected facts, it seeks to tell a consecutive story.

For chronology, the book leans in the main, though with occasional rectifications, on Ryland's "Chronological Outlines of English Literature" and Nichol's "Tables of European History, Literature," etc. Leading authorities are not constantly repeated in references in the text, but no work would be possible unless the elaborate treatment of separate periods by modern scholars had led the way. Among books frequently used may be mentioned the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the "Dictionary of

National Biography," Traill's "Social England," Green's "Short History of the English People," Saintsbury's "Short History of English Literature," Courthope's "History of English Poetry," Ten Brink's "English Literature" (3 vols.), Stopford Brooke's "English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest," Henry Morley's "English Writers," Jusserand's "Literary History of the English People," "Periods of European Literature" (Series, edited by Saintsbury), Saintsbury's "Elizabethan Literature," Gosse's "History of Eighteenth Century Literature," Stephen's "History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," Saintsbury's "History of Nineteenth Century Literature," Herford's "The Age of Wordsworth," Stedman's "Victorian Poets," Introductions to the "Warwick Library" and the "Athenæum Press Series."

For the tables on different periods and the Index, I am indebted to my friend and former pupil, Florence Converse, B.S. The tables on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, were prepared by my friend, Lucy H. Smith, A.B.

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PART I

THE SOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH literature is the literature produced by the English race. It belongs not merely to the people who live in the British Isles, but also to us here in America, and to all other people who use the English tongue. In studying, as we are to do, the great books produced on English soil, we must feel, not that we are trying to understand something foreign and alien, but that we are entering into possession of our birthright.

When we wish to understand any one, we ask two important questions: Who were his parents? and, What have been his surroundings? Inheritance and environment are as important to a nation as to a man. Now up to the time of Chaucer we have to trace the heredity, to watch the ancestors, of our English literature. After that time the literature is born, a fresh power in the world, and we watch what happens to it under different masters; the influences that play upon it from other nations — France, Italy, Spain, Palestine, Rome, and Greece. These influences modify and affect it very much, for it is sensitive; but they cannot change its nature; that is determined by its inheritance. This inheritance we will now begin at once to study.

Few nations have had a nobler heritage; few a heritage so complex. Some peoples are simple in origin; ours is composite. A variety of elements went to its making; and on this account English literature seems, at least to us English-speaking folk, the more interesting, expressive, and rich.

The life of three great races has passed into our literature, and can be traced there, from century to century, even when distinct racial existence has long been lost in the wider personality of the nation. These three are the Celtic, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Norman.

The Celts were in England first. Of their origin we do not know much, except that, like all the peoples who live in modern Europe, they travelled toward the western shores long before history began. Our first knowledge finds them established in what are now England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and also across the sea, in the fair, wide land of France. In the first century of our era the masters of the world, the Romans, invaded and partially subdued the British Isles; and through the Romans, Christianity came to Britain. Early in the fifth century the Roman legions were withdrawn, to defend the mother-city from the invasion of the Teutonic barbarians.

Later in this century these same barbarians, great hordes from the Northlands of Germany and Scandinavia, whom we call Anglo-Saxons from the names of their two most important tribes, bore down upon the British like a flood, submerged them completely in England, and took and held possession of the land for hundreds of years. These Anglo-Saxons, how-

ever, left Ireland, Scotland, and Wales largely Celtic, as they are to this day. Nor were the Celts as fully exterminated even in England as was at one time supposed. Not only Celtic place-names, but a Celtic quality which the English have never lost, show that the Celts must have blended their traditions with those of their successors. This subtle Celtic spirit survived even the Norman invasion.

For the Anglo-Saxons did not stay masters. In the eleventh century came the Normans, and conquered in their turn. They had been, to begin with, cousins of the Anglo-Saxons, these Normans; but they had lived a long time in what is now France, and intermarried there; and the old Latin civilization had affected them and taught them grace and power. So it came to pass that they became in their turn the masters of England, and for the time checked all native expression on English soil. During several centuries it seemed as if literature in England were to be only a pallid reflection of that across the Channel. But the literature of England was to become mighty and original. And when its great music at last made itself heard, the strains from three races clearly blended in its harmony.

Each of these races had a literature of its own before they came together. It is necessary to glance at these literatures separately, if we would understand what happened when they were united.

CELTIC LITERATURE

Celtic literature is almost all made up of stories. There is a great deal of it; for the Celts were, at least in Ireland, a civilized and even a learned people, centuries before the stronger Anglo-Saxons threw them into the shadow. Much of their literature reflects an earlier period when they were still living in a Pagan, primitive, heroic sort of way; but this literature was carefully preserved and written down — it had been at first chanted, not written — after Celtic Britain became Christianized. The bard had always held among the Celts a supremely honorable position: he was regarded with mystic reverence, and when the monks sprang up in vast numbers in Ireland after the introduction of Christianity, they constituted themselves the loving protectors of the bards, and wrote down probably from their lips all they could glean of the old poetry of the nation. Moreover, they added to it a large quantity, Christian in inspiration. Unpublished manuscripts enough to fill twelve or fourteen hundred octavo volumes of print are said to exist in Ireland alone.

Some of this literature is prose, some poetry, but even the poetry is usually founded on tales. The Celts were great story-tellers; and their literature is still a great treasure-house of delight for children, and for those grown-up people who are as wise as children.

This love of story-telling means that the strongest quality in the Celt was imagination; the fertility of invention and play of fancy in Celtic literature is

astounding. Next to imagination, sentiment was its chief note; it was as easy for the old Celt as it is for the modern Irish to touch the springs of tears and laughter in swift succession. In no primitive literature is the purely poetic appeal so strong. We yield ourselves as we read to a fairy world, full of bewildering magic, lovely images, strange events, and delicate or fierce emotions. Reason and the moral sense seem far away; and for the time we do not miss them in the least.

The Celt saw the world bathed in glamour, with eyes sensitive to beauty and color, whether in nature, in costume, in building, or in the human form. He felt an eager delight in the detail of landscape: —

"Bright are the tops of the brakes; gay the plumage
Of birds; the long day is the gift of the light."

"Rain without, the fern is drenched;
White the gravel of the sea; there is spray on the margin." [1]

To find nature-touches delicately truthful as these in any other primitive literature would be hard indeed. Description broadly handled, or pervaded by a spirit of gloom or unrest, is less natural to the Celt; yet no one could impart more vividly than he, when he chose, the thrill of imaginative terror and mystery. Above the head of the hero in his paroxysm of battle-fury was formed, we are told, —

"A magic mist of gloom resembling the smoky pall that drapes a regal dwelling, what time a king at nightfall of a winter's day draws near to it." [2]

[1] "The Four Ancient Books of Wales." Edited by W. F. Skene.
[2] "The Cuchullin Saga," edited by Eleanor Hull, p. 175.

The sense of strange enchantment suggested by words like these broods over all Celtic literature. The recognition of cause and effect is almost wholly absent, and the supernatural may at any moment break in upon us. Fairy maidens lure the heroes away to far lands of youth beyond our human ken; adventures indescribably fantastic or grotesque are the order of the day. Yet despite the frequent absurdity, the chief note of the Celtic fairy-lore is poetic beauty: —

"Graceful and beautiful was the flock of birds. There were nine times twenty of them, yoked together two and two by a chain of silver; . . . at the head of each group flew two birds in varied plumage."[1]

In this supernatural world move the heroes of Celtic story, and they are human only by the strength of their passions. These are fierce indeed. When Cuchullin's battle-fury is satiated, he plunges into three baths for refreshment. He heats the water of the first bath till it boils, the water of the second becomes too hot for hand to bear, while the water of the third is tepid. We gain little sense of moral uplift in reading about him and his compeers. They are voluble, bragging, jealous, and even their personal beauty and their prowess are so exaggerated as to turn into grotesque. But one must not take them as human beings; they are rather semi-mythological creatures, descendants of sun-myths, maybe, and true progenitors of fairies and giants. Their lives are made up of a wealth of disconnected incidents, in which the extraordinary inventiveness of the Celt

[1] "The Cuchullin Saga," p. 15.

has free play, but which move as a rule to no great end of epic achievement. They fascinate us for a time; but by and by we weary of them, we weary of all the brilliant, incoherent enchantments of Celtic literature, and we long to return to the world of reality, where reason and conscience have a fuller share in the determination of fate.

Several of our illustrations have been taken from the old Irish epics: these are perhaps the most important monuments of Celtic literature. There were three cycles, each binding together many separate stories. The first was about a semi-supernatural people called the Tuatha-De-Danann; they probably represent some race of ancient gods in whom the Celts may have believed before their migration. The second, of later origin, gathers around the great king Conchobar and Cuchullin, his comrade. In the story of the Tragical Death of the Sons of Usnach, which belongs to this cycle, Celtic emotion is more marked than Celtic extravagance: it is full of pure poetry and tragic passion. But the third cycle has become the most famous. Its events are placed as late as the third century A.D., but it is purely Pagan still. It tells of Finn the mighty, of Oscar, and above all of Ossian, the poet-warrior, most typical figure of Celtic song. These Ossianic poems were first gathered from oral tradition in Scotland and given to the world in garbled version by Macpherson, in the eighteenth century. Later they were discovered, and in fuller form, in Ireland also. People were well puzzled, and controversy raged high: first, whether Macpherson's Ossian were not an invention of his own; then, later,

whether Ireland or Scotland were the native land of the legends. But we know now that the story is truly ancient, however strangely Macpherson transformed it, and that it came into being when Ireland and Scotland were all one country and shared their literature. Nothing more strikingly evinces the unity of Celtic Britain than this common possession of ancient tales.

These old epics with their Pagan spirit are linked in an interesting way with the Christian literature of the Celts. The king Conchobar, so runs the legend, was born on the same day with Christ. Another legend unites the Ossianic story with St. Patrick. The saint was busy converting Ireland, and the sound of church bells was heard in the land. One evening he and his gentle monks saw approaching a noble looking man, majestic of stature, dazed and mournful in aspect. This was Ossian, last of Finn's warriors, who had long been magically detained in fairy-land, and returned at last to find the heroes dead and the saints replacing them. Patrick bent himself to the conversion of Ossian, and curious poems tell of the colloquies between the puzzled but courteous old hero and the Christian saint. Ossian obediently tried to understand this strange, tame, unheroic new faith, and used his great strength as Patrick bade to carry stones for a church; but he yearned for his old freedom, and the religion of humility seemed strange indeed to his Pagan soul. He loved to exchange tales about the mighty Finn for Patrick's rhapsodies on the New Jerusalem. His great longing was that his dear comrades should inherit this new Paradise: "Unknown to Heaven's king," he cries, "bring thou

in the Finns."[1] When Patrick says that God would find him out and be angry, Ossian retorts, not without force: "How different Mac Cumhail, the Finns' noble king! All men, uninvited, might enter his great hall." On the whole, we feel that he cannot have been an entirely satisfactory convert.

But the Celts in general seem to have accepted Christianity with ease, and to have found in it, almost from the first, elements congenial to their national character. Celtic Christianity, as the monuments which have come down to us would seem to show, was steeped rather in Christian sentiment than in Christian principle. Many of the Celtic Christian stories, — the Voyage of St. Brandan, the lives of St. Patrick, St. Bridget, and, above all, of St. Columba, — are full of rare and exquisite beauty. They have the same imaginative qualities as the Pagan Celtic literature, even to the frequent inconsequence and delightful disregard of logic; but the old fierceness has been replaced by a wistful and gentle note of Christian mysticism. Sometimes, as in the curious Welsh triads, little poems of three lines, such as we have quoted on page 21, the Celts took to moralizing after they were converted; but they never made much of a success at this, and the distinctive quality of their religion can be found in lovely legends, such as were produced from the earliest times, and may still be heard, in long winter evenings, recited around the hearth-fire in the Highlands of Scotland.

For the Celtic spirit lives on. Arthur the Celt,

[1] "The Book of the Dean of Lismore." Introduction by William F. Skene.

not Beowulf the Teuton, is the chosen hero of dreams to the English race. They have a strange old legend in Wales about Merlin, most mystic figure among the wizards of the world. He was befooled in his old age by a fair woman, for she persuaded him to tell her the Secret of the Prison of Air; and no sooner had she learned it than she spoke the magic spell he taught and shut up the aged enchanter; then she fled mocking through the forest, and he remains forever enclosed, helpless in his air dungeon, invisible to man. But every now and then, from the clearness of empty space, a voice will be heard, singing wondrous songs or uttering strange wisdom, always with an undernote of wailing sorrow. It is the voice of Merlin, who can never die. For many centuries after the Anglo-Saxon conquest the Celts seemed to vanish; the Normans recked nothing of them; great civilizations arose that knew them not; and to this day they have never resumed their place among the nations. But their voice, the music of their song, can still be heard by him who listens, sounding from century to century, as the great history of England goes on. This voice, this music, will never pass away.

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Modern Celtic Literature. Since about 1880 there has been a revival of enthusiasm for Celtic subjects and Celtic manner. Some leaders in this neo-Celtic movement are, or were, Aubrey de Vere, James Clarence Mangan, William Yeats, Katharine Tynan, William Sharp, Patrick Geddes, Fiona Macleod, Robert Buchanan, Sebastian Evans, Ernest Rhys.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Nearly all the books mentioned above, especially Montalembert's "Monks of the West," and the numerous volumes of stories, are delightful reading. As the aim in this introductory work is rather to become sensitive to the peculiar Celtic element in our literature than to acquire a fund of information, wide and swift reading is recommended. It is pleasant and profitable to let every member of the class tell the whole class a Celtic fairy tale, selected either by himself or by the teacher, and point out all the special Celtic characteristics which he can discern in the story. Also, the students may bring to class passages from their reading illustrating Celtic love of color, Celtic feeling for nature, Celtic humor, inconsequence, love

of mystery, poetic sentiment, passion, impetuosity. The stories suggested furnish ample and obvious materials for this inductive study.

Special topics may be presented by more mature students on such subjects as Pagan Celtic Heroes: Cuchullin, Finn, Ossian, Maeldune; Christian Celtic Heroes: St. Columba, St. Bridget, St. Patrick; The Supernatural in Celtic Literature; The Decorative Sense of the Celt in Architecture and Costume. Any of the subjects suggested for the whole class may also be treated in this way.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Interesting lectures, to which any boy or girl would like to listen, can be given by the teacher. A few are here suggested, with authorities from which they can be prepared: Early Celtic Christianity. See Montalembert; Standish O'Grady, "Silva Gadelica," Vol. II; Whitley Stokes, "Tripartite Life of St. Patrick"; Aubrey de Vere, "Legends of St. Patrick." Mythologic Traits in Celtic Literature. See John Rhys, "Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom," "Studies in the Arthurian Legend." The Story of Deirdriu. See Stokes and Windisch, "Irische Texte"; Sigerson, "Bards of the Gael and Gall." Hull, "The Cuchullin Saga." Old Welsh Poetry. See Stephens, "Literature of the Cymry"; Skene, "Four Ancient Books of Wales"; Sharp, "Lyra Celtica." The Celtic Bard. See Sigerson, "Bards of the Gael and Gall"; Rhys, "Literary History of Ireland"; O'Curry, "Manners and Customs." The Modern Celtic Revival, see *ante*.

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

The Anglo-Saxons were a people strangely different from the Celts. Reason and the moral sense, the qualities in which the Celt was weakest, were strong, almost controlling, factors in their nature. They were a serious people and often melancholy, not after the emotional fashion of the Irish, whose smiles and tears chase each other like sunshine and shadow over a green Irish meadow, but with a settled

gravity which conceived of human life as a strenuous and sober thing. No other race which went to the making of England gives so strong an impression of moral nobility.

When first we know of them, they with many kindred tribes inhabit the vast forests which cover Northern Europe, — a drear and solemn land, where only here and there by the seacoast a strip of country is reclaimed and a little village established. The sea is more available for their highway than the forest, and they are a sea-loving people, at home on the gray Northern ocean, with its wild storms and sunless waves. They are at times savage, cruel, and revengeful, with no trace of the gentleness sometimes evinced even in the Pagan literature of the Celts. But they hold women in reverence; they are faithful even to death to the oath of comradeship sealed by strange rites by mingling their blood in their footprints; they respect and practise the truth. For religion, they believe, so far as we can tell, not in Odin and Thor and Valhalla, — a faith which their cousins of Scandinavia developed at one period, — but in the great earth-mother, in the mystic ritual of sacrifice, and in the worship of ancestors.

They pushed their way across the sea and came to England. There they won the day — still heathen — over the Christian Celts, throughout the better land. They cultivated the country; they established a great civilization which lasted till the Norman conquest; and they produced a large literature, much of which has come down to us intact.

Although this civilization lasted so long, it is a little difficult to trace development in it or to distin-

guish its periods. The same thing is true of the literature. It has strength, force, depth, this literature: it must of course always be profoundly significant and interesting to us. But it lacks charm, except when it blends with the Celtic. This blending often happened. It probably happened in very ancient times in the strange little country of Iceland, whence we receive the most imaginative poetry that the Teutonic peoples have bequeathed to us; it happened in England also, for from Northumbria, where the Celtic people mingled with the Anglo-Saxon population, the best and most enjoyable Anglo-Saxon work proceeds.

There are a certain number of stories in Anglo-Saxon, as there are sure to be in any primitive literature, but not nearly so many in proportion as among the Celts. Nor do they show the same power of invention. Most of them are poetic paraphrases of the Bible, or legends of saints. They move slowly, pausing often for comment, more interested in their sentiment than in their narrative. There are moral sayings and proverbs also in Anglo-Saxon literature, there are scientific treatises and chronicles, there are above all a portentously large number of sermons. These forefathers of ours loved to moralize. But whatever the defects of this literature, it is full of deep feeling for human life. At times it has a wonderful way of searching into the soul and revealing it. What we call the subjective or introspective habit — that is, the habit of watching what happens in one's own mind — is developed to a surprising degree in Anglo-Saxon poetry. People talk sometimes as if this habit were a modern

invention, but neither Wordsworth nor Tennyson ever wrote a poem in which self-revelation was clearer than in the "Dream of the Rood," nor does the poetry of Shelley reveal a more individual temperament than that of the great poet Cynewulf.

In his own way, the Anglo-Saxon had as strong a feeling for Nature as the Celt, so that his poetry is not all absorbed by human interest. But it was not for him to note the bright detail, the color of heather-tops or ash-buds, or of the plumage of a bird. He cared rather for the sentiment of the scene, and this to his eyes was habitually a sentiment of vastness, mystery, and gloom. The gray tossing of the Northern sea, with the faint lights that played across it, the wide sweep of the fen-country, over which brooded dank and fearful fogs, the blowing of the wind from the welkin, were the things that fascinated his fancy.

In literature which expresses the life of the Anglo-Saxons before they were Christianized, by far the most important thing is the precious old epic of "Beowulf." Every one ought to read this poem through. It is not very long, it is accessible in good translations, it is a very noble thing, and it is in a peculiar sense the beginning of our national literature. Yet, though it may first have been written down in England, the Anglo-Saxons must have brought it with them in their hearts when they came; doubtless they had chanted portions of it at many a rude battle-feast across the sea. For the life the poem shows us is that of a period when the Teutonic peoples had not yet gathered themselves into nations, but were established in little settlements or colonies here and there along the sea-coast of Northern Europe. We can

learn much from the poem of the civilization, the modes of life and thought of our forefathers.

If we compare this epic with the Celtic epics, we note first of all that it is consecutive and coherent, not inconsequent and fantastic. Its action is simple: it tells a single story, and tells it directly and well. Then we notice that, despite a strong and weird supernatural element, the story is conceived as real. We have passed from a mythical to an heroic atmosphere. The hero, Beowulf, is an actual man, a moral being, as Finn and Cuchullin were not. He is an interesting figure, splendid of aspect as he comes over the sea in his foamy-necked ship, likest a bird, and leaps to land arrayed in shining battle-burnie, — lofty in character as he speaks and fights manfully against awful foes. Beowulf is of course first of all a warrior; but a striking point about this first old English hero is that his best fighting is done not for himself but for others. The poem falls into two parts. In the first, Beowulf comes with his thanes over the sea to help the aged king Hrothgar, whose great, shining hall, the pride of the Danes, is ravaged night after night by a terrible monster, a "mighty moor-stepper," named Grendel. Beowulf gives the monster his death-wound, and follows him and his horrible mother to the deep sea-caves, their grim abode, where he slays the dam also. In the second part of the poem, the hero is an aged man; he is king over his people, and he goes forth, knowing well that he shall fall, to his death-fight with a great fire-drake, or dragon, that is laying waste the land. He kills the dragon, is killed himself, and dies exulting almost

with his last breath that he has saved his people, and won for them the mystic golden treasures hidden in the creature's lair.

The supernatural element in the poem is impressive and terrible. It is born of mist and darkness. Grendel and his mother "in constant night hold the misty moors." "Shadow-goers," the old poet calls them, "Spirits of Elsewhere," and his shudder comes to us through the ages. There is no sign of humor, of grace, of bright fancy, as with the joyous fairy beings who lure the Celtic heroes away from earth. These Anglo-Saxon monsters are probably an impersonation of the powers of nature, and it is a nature intensely feared, less for its practical dangers than for its malign suggestion of dark mysteries.

In the direct descriptions, especially of the sea, there is a note of fear mingled with a note of exultation. The treatment is often wild and fine. We see a race of bold sea-rovers, at home on the waves, delighting in them, yet fearful too of their fierce power. The very spirit of the sea breathes through Beowulf's tale of his swimming match, or through the great description of the approach to the dwelling of Grendel. This dark, sad nature is in tune with the whole poem. The mists droop low over its mental as over its physical landscape. The fundamental spirit is a grave recognition of an inevitable Fate, in the presence of which human life goes softly. Yet blended with this, in the illogical union always to be found in the English race, and source of much of its power, is a stern sense of personal duty. "Weird goeth ever as it must!" exclaims Beowulf; yet "Fate often preserves an undoomed earl, if his cour-

age is good." The poem reveals to us many of the sources of the future power of the English: it shows us a race that can dream as well as fight, a race permeated by the instinct of moral responsibility, a race that can compass much, but that cannot compass light-heartedness.

One more point must be mentioned about "Beowulf": it connects us with the great epic of the Germanic peoples,—the "Story of the Volsungs," which, in its latest and most famous form, became the "Niebelungen Lied." The earliest mention of the Siegfried myth, which is the heart of this great epic, is found in our Anglo-Saxon poem, and the dragon-fight of Beowulf himself has many points of contact with the greater story. It is pleasant to be able to realize in this way our common heritage with a sister-nation.

"Beowulf," as it comes to us, has been copied by a Christian scribe, and abounds in interpolations. The same thing is true of all the Anglo-Saxon literature which seems to bear internal evidence of Pagan origin. We must be on our guard against ascribing this literature to an earlier date than the Christian literature in Anglo-Saxon. Nevertheless, whatever may be the period of final writing, there is so wide a difference in spirit between "Beowulf" and a handful of allied poems, and the rest of old English literature, that we must consider this literature in two groups.

For Christianity came and profoundly modified the characteristics of the race. The moral seriousness of the Anglo-Saxon found satisfaction and transfiguration in the faith of Christ, as the exquisite

emotional sensitiveness of the Celt had done. Not that the Christianizing of Teutonic England was easy; it was a long drama with many uncertainties in its progress. It began in 597, when Pope Gregory sent a band of Italian monks, headed by one Augustine, as missionaries to the savage distant isles. The Anglo-Saxons treated the monks with grave courtesy and, with relapses, tried their religion, worshipping the White Christ or their wild old gods, as mood or season impelled them. But the powers of Christianity were reënforced from the island itself; for the native faith and the tradition of St. Columba were lingering still and, as the land became more peaceful, new saints ventured forth, of the old Celtic race, and devoted themselves with humblest devotion to furthering the cause of Christ. The Italian monks were full of administrative genius. They built great churches and monasteries, they developed ecclesiastical government, they brought Church music and Greek learning to the British Isles. The Celt had none of these things. His kingdom was not of this world. Simple, poor, unlearned, his heart was that of a child. It was not strange that the time soon came when the two forms of Christianity clashed. The Italian party won the day in a full conclave, held at Whitby in 664, the nominal subject of which was the date of the observance of Easter; and for hundreds of years English Christianity was governed from Rome. But the native strain, touched to peculiar grace and mystery, can long be heard in the legends of the English saints.

It is very wonderful to watch the new spirit of

love and fraternal peace striving with the old warrior zest of the infant nation. At first, the new ideas slip constantly into the old forms of expression, with strange effect. The conception of the Hero is shifting from the fighter who slays his thousands and seeks the lust of life, to the hermit who accepts insults with gladness, and mortifies the flesh in preparation for heaven; but Guthlac the eremite is described in the same language as Beowulf the warrior, and his struggles against sin are treated in the old heroic manner. A martyr is strangely described as a "beast of battle," and a poem on the Apostles begins with the exclamation: "What! We have heard of twelve, heroes under heaven, warriors gloriously blest." Christ is "the joy of Æthelings, the Victory-Son of God," and the legends of saints, of Apostles, the story of the Lord of Love Himself, are chanted in the lofty strains of the Saga. "I trembled through all my limbs," says the Cross in another poem, "when the young Hero that was Almighty God, embraced me."

But as we read on we become aware that a great transformation has been wrought, not only in the character but in the imagination of the race. The mists that hung low over the old Pagan world have lifted, and the imagination gazes far afield, to horizons definite indeed, but almost infinitely remote, to the Day of Creation on the one hand, on the other to the great Day of Judgment to be. The story of the Bible so possesses men that they can think of little else. Anglo-Saxon Christian poetry is still grave and sad, with the melancholy which seems a natural part of the race-inheritance; but it has a

note of hope unheard before, and, at times, as in the beautiful poem of the "Phœnix," the wintry nature familiar to these men of the Northlands is replaced by the vision of a heavenly country, blossoming and bathed in light. The hostile supernatural forces in which our forefathers had believed, were retained by the new faith, changed into those demons who haunted the imagination all through the middle ages; but Christianity added another supernatural of light and joy, a lore of the angels, and of sweet miracles of love and healing.

We may distinguish two schools in Christian Anglo-Saxon poetry. The first, produced in Northumbria toward the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century, gathers about the name of Cædmon; the second, belonging to the end of the eighth century, centres in the name of Cynewulf. Behind these names we may see two personalities, great, though dim. Both groups of poems are avowedly Christian. But the Cædmonian poems draw their inspiration from the Old Testament. The story of Cædmon, told by the Venerable Bede, is too beautiful to omit. Connected in some menial capacity with the great Abbey of Whitby, he was in the habit of leaving the hall sadly when all present were in good old fashion called upon to sing; for the gift of song had been denied to him. "But on one evening when he had care of the cattle, he fell asleep in the stable; and One stood by him, and saluting him said, 'Cædmon, sing me something.' And he answered, 'I know not how to sing, and for this reason I left the feast.' Then the other said, 'Nevertheless, you will have to sing to me.' 'What shall I sing?'

Cædmon replied. 'Sing,' said the other, 'the beginning of things created.' Whereupon he immediately began to sing in praise of God, the world's Upbuilder, verses which he had not heard before." The gift remained with him all his lifetime; and the Cædmonian poems in which we trace surely his tradition if not often his hand, paraphrase Genesis and Exodus with abrupt passion and fierce battle-ardor, chanting the Creation, the Fall of Man, and the dark fate of Lucifer, after an imaginative fashion which may well have given suggestions to the great epic of Milton. They chant, too, the savage and triumphant exploit of Judith, a saga-woman, a true Germanic Princess, as they conceive her; they chant the Story of Daniel.

In the second group of poems, which shelters itself under the name of Cynewulf, we feel the touch or influence of a true poet. A Celtic strain may account for the wistful beauty of some of this work; but the strong tendency to self-analysis and the profound religious experience it reveals are Saxon. The warrior-flame still leaps up at times through the even movement of the poetry, yet subjects are now from the New Testament rather than from the Old. We find also a treatment of various legends of the Church: the tale of the finding of the true cross by the Empress Helena, the legend of St. Guthlac, and that of the Apostle Andrew. And we find a wonderful personal note in a poem like "The Dream of the Rood," which tells how the writer, apparently a wild, sinful, Pagan man, was converted to Christ by the midnight vision of a great Cross, jewelled, streaming with blood, upsoaring to the sky. If Cynewulf wrote this poem, which

is not certain, he was the first great poet of the spiritual life in England. That he was of a deeply religious nature, we know from his signed poems; for four poems, — "Christ," "Juliana," "Elene," and the "Fates of the Apostles," besides some little lyrical "Riddles," he signed in a curious way, by inserting the letters of his name here and there through the verse. Feeling, in all the work of this school, the union of intense love of nature with high imagination and religious passion, we are well assured that we are indeed on the track which leads to Wordsworth and Shelley, to Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and to Browning's "Saul."

The great period of Anglo-Saxon poetry was then the seventh and eighth centuries. All this poetry comes down to us in the West Saxon dialect. In form it was based on the principle of alliteration. That is, instead of rhyming the ends of lines, as we do, the mysterious instinct for harmony of sound was satisfied by words in the body of the verse beginning with the same sound: two in the first half of the line, one in the second. There was no fixed number of syllables, but each line had normally four beats, or accents. Modern English poetry retains alliteration for ornament, as any one can see by opening a page of Swinburne, but discards it as an essential to structure. It is possible, however, though not easy, to train the ear to understand how pleasurably the old use of it affected our forefathers. Anglo-Saxon poetry has more metaphors than similes, and it is characterized by a habit of repetition or paraphrase like the parallelism of ancient Hebrew poetry.

Almost all this poetry came, probably, from North-

umberland. In the ninth century, after the Danish invasion had laid the Northern kingdom waste, we meet with a development of Anglo-Saxon prose in the southern kingdom of Wessex, under the fostering care of King Alfred. This prose, however, calls for brief comment only, unless one is studying linguistics. Like all primitive prose, it lacks the sense of art, and it is very dry and dull. The original part consists of a large number of sermons and homilies; but more interesting than these are a number of translations from historical, scientific, or religious books in Latin, made or commanded by the pious and learned king. The most important are a translation of the great work on Church discipline by Pope Gregory, called "Pastoral Care," an adaptation of a volume of travel and geography by the Spaniard Orosius, and an expansion of the work "On the Consolations of Philosophy," by the Latin Boethius. We have, also, and it is the most interesting monument of Anglo-Saxon prose, the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, a history carried on by the monks, which is our chief source of information till a period after the Norman conquest. This is invaluable for the study of old English history; but it has no literary quality.

Taking it as a whole, one cannot fail to pause in respect before Anglo-Saxon literature. It is the expression of a strong and noble race. Yet with all its solemn force, it leaves one unsatisfied. Had this race retained possession of England, neither the "Canterbury Tales" nor the "Faerie Queen" nor "King Henry Fifth" could have been produced on English soil.

REFERENCE BOOKS

1. **Anglo-Saxon Literature.**

TEN BRINK, English Literature to Wyclif. A valuable and trustworthy reference book. Dry reading.

STOPFORD BROOKE, History of Early English Literature: The best popular study of Anglo-Saxon poetry. English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest. A condensation of the earlier book, with additional chapters on Anglo-Saxon prose.

MORLEY, English Writers, Vols. I, II.

JUSSERAND, Literary History of the English People. Bk. I, Chs. II–IV. A remarkable combination of scholarship and charm.

POWELL and VIGFUSSON, Corpus Poeticum Boreale. A delightful collection of old Icelandic poetry, which is the best representative extant of the poetry of the Germanic peoples.

2. **Anglo-Saxon Civilization.**

SHARON TURNER, History of the Anglo-Saxons. A standard work, though no longer modern.

J. R. GREEN, The Making of England; Short History of the English People, Ch. I.

GUMMERE, Germanic Origins.

STUBBS, Constitutional History of England, Vol. I.

FREEMAN, The Norman Conquest, Vol. I.

MONTALEMBERT, The Monks of the West. This fascinating book tells with great vividness the story of the Christianizing of England.

BRIGHT, Early English Church History. Clarendon Press, 1878.

THE VENERABLE BEDE, Ecclesiastical History. Translated by Giles. Bohn's Library. After all, more can be learned about our Anglo-Saxon fathers from Bede than from any modern author, and in a more interesting way.

POWELL and VIGFUSSON, Corpus Poeticum Boreale, Vol. II, Excursus I: The Beliefs and Worships of the Ancient Norsemen. This is a fine study of the Pagan religion of our fathers before they became Christianized.

Social England, edited by H. D. TRAILL (Cassell, 1893), Ch. I.

THOMAS WRIGHT. The Celt, the Roman, and the Teuton, Chs. XV, XVI.

GRANT ALLEN, Early Britain; Anglo-Saxon Britain. S. P. C. K., 18.

3. A classified enumeration of Anglo-Saxon literature will be found in Stopford Brooke. The standard text of Anglo-Saxon poetry is in Grein's "Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie," edited by Wülker.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Rapid reading in translations is very feasible and interesting. The class should at least read selections from the "Beowulf." Translations by Kemble, Garnett, Hall.

1. **Outline for Study of the "Beowulf."**

Theories of date, origin, authorship. (These can of course be omitted with young students.)
The scenery and the feeling for nature in the poem.
The social life of our ancestors as shown in it.
The ideal of the hero it conveys.
The poetic art and imagination of the poem.
The ethical ideal and attitude.
Comparison of spirit and method with the epics of the classic world, Homer and Virgil. (This is possible and suggestive with a class that is reading Greek or Latin in preparation for college.)

2. **Suggestions for Other Work.**

With fairly advanced classes, special reading might well be assigned to certain students, and short reports made informally on poems like the "Judith," the "Elene," the "Dream of the Rood," or the "Riddles" of Cynewulf. Translations of Cynewulf's "Christ" by Gollancz; of "Judith" by Cook and Garnett. See Gurteen's "Epic of the Fall of Man" for comparative study of Cædmon and Milton.

The students, even the youngest, should be encouraged to give their impressions of the general characteristics of Anglo-Saxon genius. What sort of people were our ancestors? What kinds of poetry did they like best? What did they think of the sea? What were they afraid of?

What did they admire? Were they a happy people? Did they make good jokes? Did they have strong feelings, and of what kind? What were their chief pleasures? etc. All the answers should be illustrated by the students from their reading; one cannot begin real inductive work too soon.

3. **Talks from the Teacher.**

An ordinary class can give very little time to Anglo-Saxon literature, and that time would better be spent on reading one or two texts. But broader illustrative talks from the teacher might increase very much the interest and value of the work. A few possible and desirable subjects for such talks are suggested here. The references already given suggest abundant material from which the talks could be prepared.

The Way our Ancestors Lived.

See references on Anglo-Saxon civilization. Also Powell and Vigfusson.

The Religion of our Ancestors while Heathen.

See besides Stopford Brooke, etc., Powell and Vigfusson, excursus on The Beliefs and Worship of the Ancient Norsemen. Also Gummere, Germanic Origins.

Old Germanic Poetry Parallel to that of the Anglo-Saxons.

See, in particular, the "Story of the Volsungs," Camelot edition, translated by Morris and Magnusson. Also Morris's magnificent poem "Sigurd the Volsung." Also, in Powell and Vigfusson, Book V, The Latest Epics. This lecture should introduce the students to the great epic of the Northern peoples, which is a most precious part of our heritage.

The Christianizing of England.

Montalembert, Bright, and The Venerable Bede will give ample material for this interesting story, which should be presented mainly by anecdote. See also Aubrey de Vere, "Legends of the Saxon Saints."

The Treatment of Nature and of the Sea in Anglo-Saxon Poetry. Beowulf, and the poems of Cynewulf. Stopford Brooke treats the subject fully and lovingly. It is rich in interest.

The Poetic Art of the Anglo-Saxons.

See appendix to Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader.

NORMAN LITERATURE

While the Celt dreamed in fairy-land and the Anglo-Saxon brooded on Fate, the Norman rode forth with vigor, audacity, and good cheer, to the conquest of the world. He was a practical person. He knew how to build magnificent churches and abbeys and castles which are still the wonder of men; he knew how to govern. He was very religious too, — when we first know him he was Christianized, — but he took his religion simply, regarding fighting as his chief duty, if he could persuade himself, as he always did, that he fought on God's side. So he became the master of England, and ruled it, well for the most part, till from this mingling of races the English race was gradually formed.

There is one splendid poem in which we can read the character of the Normans when they came to the British Isles. This is the "Song of Roland." It binds us to the French as "Beowulf," with its relation to the "Niebelungen Lied," binds us to the Germans; for it is the chief glory of old French literature. Yet we may claim it too; for the Normans rode to the battle of Hastings with an early version of its stirring strains upon their lips, the poem very likely took final shape in England after the conquest, and the best manuscript of it was certainly written by an Anglo-Norman and is preserved at Oxford. It is fine to think that there was a time when all Europe shared its great inspirations: perhaps that time will some day come again. It is fine, also, to an English-speaking man, to think of England as a meeting-place of races, and this she emphatically was.

The "Song of Roland" is a poem not of brooding thought nor of lovely fancy, but solely of noble deed. It has a stern tale to tell: with inexorable swiftness it tells it. The Celt may pause in his fiercest battle ardor to bid us note how the shields of the warriors fighting by firelight gleam like the white wings of birds; the Anglo-Saxon will pause to point a moral. The Norman story never pauses. It is a story of failure, but of failure more glorious than victory. It tells how the mighty king Charlemagne, the Christian monarch, with his long white beard, has been fighting the Paynim hosts of Spain; how, deceived by fair promises, he withdraws his host homeward, through the defiles of the Pyrenees, leaving the rear to be guarded by the heroes Roland and Oliver with a small company; how, betrayed by a jealous French noble, this rear-guard is cut off and encompassed by numberless foes; how Roland and Oliver and the rest fight magnificently, desperately, hopelessly; and how, when all his friends are slain, and he has himself received his death-wound, the dying Roland winds at last that mighty horn whereof the echoes, which were to sound through all history, first recall, not to assistance but to vengeance, the army of Charlemagne.

This poem is obviously much later than "Beowulf" or the epic cycles of the Celt. The spirit of the Crusades is in it, and the hosts of Christian Europe are opposed to the hated Paynim hordes. It shows us a feudal society, governed by new laws of honor and courtesy suggesting the chivalry to be; a race that can ride forth gayly with songs upon its lips to fight a losing battle. The hero no longer fights

alone, or for such causes as his fancy may direct; he is one of a fellowship, and loyalty to king, to country, to comrades, and to God, sustains life and glorifies death. The conscious belief that a Paradise awaits the knights of God nerves the arm and cheers the heart of every French warrior. The archbishop Turpin, himself a warrior-priest, blesses the French hosts as they go forth to a combat known by them all to be against fatal odds. Here is his speech to them: —

"'Lords, we are here for our monarch's sake;
Hold we for him, though our death should come;
Fight for the succor of Christendom.
The battle approaches, — ye know it well, —
For ye see the ranks of the infidel.
Cry Mea Culpa, and lowly kneel;
I will assoil you, your souls to heal.
In death ye are holy martyrs crowned.'
The Franks alighted and knelt on ground:
In God's high name the host he blessed,
And for penance gave them, — to fight their best."[1]

All the temper of the Norman is there; militant, devout, stern, yet touched with a certain lightness in the apprehension of life. When the archbishop himself is in his death-agony, his last prayer is for the souls of his comrades, his last thought for the Emperor whom we shall never see again. He prays: —

"That God in mercy your souls may give
On the flowers of Paradise to live;
Mine own death comes, with anguish sore,
That I see mine emperor never more."

[1] The Song of Roland: translated by Colonel J. O'Hagan.

Reading the "Song of Roland," we can well understand how the Norman vanquished the Saxon, as the Saxon before him had vanquished the yet more ineffective Celt.

Yet the vanquished in the end were victors. The Normans were, it is true, a great race; England would never have been what she is without them. But when all is said, the Anglo-Saxon is the dominant type of the composite English people. The practical genius of the Norman lends them energy indeed; something of his gayety makes them less ponderous, more elastic, than their German cousins. The poetic sensitiveness of the Celt, on the other hand, his power to dream, his ready sentiment, impart at times to English character and English poetry a delicate mystic charm far from the clear sparkle which characterizes the pure Latin races. But the earnestness of the Anglo-Saxons and their profound sense of moral responsibility are the controlling English traits.

The "Song of Roland" by no means illustrates all the factors contributed by the Norman to the English nation; we shall find others in the copious literature of the Anglo-Norman period, to which we shall soon turn.

REFERENCE BOOKS

FREEMAN, Norman Conquest, Vol. I, Ch. IV; Vol. V, Ch. XXV. See also articles on Normandy and The Normans in Encyclopædia Britannica. ROEMER, The Norman in Gaul. SARAH ORNE JEWETT, The Story of the Normans. MATTHEW ARNOLD, Celtic Literature. O'HAGAN, translation of the "Song of Roland" (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.), has excellent Introduc-

tion on the epic. Fine sketches of Norman character in apposition to the Saxon are found in Kingsley's "Hereward the Wake."

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

O'Hagan's spirited translation of the "Song of Roland" should be read rapidly through, and discussed by the class. Contrasts between this poem and "Beowulf," in respect to the ideal of heroism, the feeling for nature, the poetic method, etc., should be pointed out. Questions based on the text, and other critical reading, may review Norman characteristics; but this is a point where a clear and simple impression is better than a complex one, and further understanding of the French element in our literature may be put off till the Anglo-Norman period is familiar.

LITERATURE IN LATIN

Celt, Saxon, and Norman are, then, the ancestors of the English race, and in studying them we have studied the heredity of the nation and of its literature. But even before the literature grew up and learned to speak in its own tongue, there was one other influence which did not enter into its organic being, but did, nevertheless, affect it very much. This was the Latin of the Church. It was a decadent tongue, in which little that was vital was produced, but it formed a medium through which many of the ideals of the ancient world, as well as the ideals of Christianity, were applied to the young and primitive peoples. Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Normans, all, when they became civilized and were fired with literary ambition, learned Latin and wrote in Latin. This habit continued through the middle ages; mediæval Latin literature is vast in bulk, and was, of course, held in common by the whole of Europe. Even in the Christian centuries just preceding the

Norman conquest an enormous amount of literature in Latin was written. It came almost entirely, as was natural, from the Church, from monks and priests; and it was almost wholly of a religious character. It consisted of sermons, homilies, moral treatises, and lives of saints. It was a literature of learning and of edification; for the Church had by this time a great tradition of her own, proceeding partly from Rome and partly from the East. The effect of this imposition of decadent language and modes of thought upon immature races was not wholly happy. Much of this literature is dreary in the extreme. The thought-life of Europe could not be understood without discussing it, but in a book which is to emphasize art-values we can pass it over lightly. Now and then, however, a book of enduring importance and beauty was produced in Latin, as was natural when we remember how much of the idealism of these centuries was shut away in monasteries, and sought to express itself through the Church and her accredited mediums. Of such books, in the period of which we are treating, one is highly significant if we would understand the English race. This is Bede's "Ecclesiastical History," which is a delightful book and a noble monument of English letters although not written in English. Composed in the eighth century, it seems strangely modern in its sweet reasonableness and real critical and historic sense; it begins the long and honorable list of the products of the Christian scholarship of England. It deals, despite its title, not only with Church matters, but with all English life. Nowhere can the transformation to a peaceful Christian nation, of the

savage Pagan race seen in "Beowulf," be so pleasantly traced as through Bede's charming stories of old kings and saints, and the revelation of his own gentle spirit.

REFERENCE BOOKS

BEDE'S Ecclesiastical History, tr. in Bohn's Antiquarian Library: G. F. BROWNE, The Venerable Bede.

PART II

THE MIDDLE AGES



CHAPTER I

GENERAL CONDITIONS

THE middle ages lasted, broadly speaking, from the beginning of the Christian era through the fifteenth century. This long period falls into two clearly marked divisions. Rather more than the first thousand years are usually known as the Dark Ages. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a great change took place; and it is the subsequent period, which in England may be said to begin with the Norman Conquest, that we are now to study.

As people grow older, the great words that describe different epochs or civilizations become so charged with meaning that they cannot be heard without excitement. We say "antiquity," and at once our soul is living in a special world, full of emotions, interests, and sights that are all its own. We say "the Renaissance"; presto! we have travelled into another planet. Great epochs have come, have passed like shadows, in human history; but they are not dead. Not only have they bequeathed to us the heritage, inward and outward, that makes us what we are; they all live forever in the Imagination, where, as an English poet has told us, all things exist.

I. A Period of Expansion

But we must have lived eagerly and long in the wider life of the race as well as in our own tiny

affairs before such words yield up their full content. A little book like this can introduce the great periods only by a few hints. We must think of the later middle ages as differing from the Dark Ages which had immediately preceded them by a passion for experiment, by a new fulness of life. Conditions had long been stationary in Europe. Unswerving law prevailed. The stiffness of Byzantine painting, the solemn majesty of Romanesque architecture, had expressed, at least in Northern Europe, the spirit of the time. Two influences in particular, coöperating with less tangible causes, led the middle ages into a larger air: the Crusades, and the establishment of Universities.

The Crusades.

The Crusades began at the very end of the eleventh century, and lasted through the thirteenth. They were undertaken from a passionate religious desire to rescue the tomb of the Saviour from paynim hands. But they accomplished something very different from their conscious aim; for they set Europe in motion. They drew all the Christian nations together, in fellowship and common knowledge, and brought them in contact with the marvels of the East, with Oriental luxury, learning, romance.

Mediæval universities.

Of course all this wonderfully stimulated men's imaginations. At the same time, the great mediæval universities were giving a new impetus to men's minds. Until the eleventh century, education and scholarship had been wholly in the hands of monks. The monasteries had rendered a noble service, too; but now the secularizing of education came, and assuredly widened human thought. During the twelfth century, the Universities of Bologna, Paris,

Oxford, sprang into power. The rediscovery a little later, through contact with the East, of certain works by the philosopher Aristotle, hitherto unknown, produced a real intellectual revolution, and stimulated that scholastic philosophy which was an immense power in its day in the world of mind. Eagerly the hosts of scholars who thronged these universities discussed and debated everything within their horizon; and a democratic and critical spirit reigned among them, and spread abroad through all classes of people.

The mediæval spirit: union of faith and freedom.

The universities were, however, still closely connected with the Church. They concerned themselves with logic, grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, but with theology first and last. We must never forget that the whole life of the middle ages was profoundly Christian and Catholic, and that we rightly call them the ages of faith. Yet within the limits of an established and unquestioned faith, there was abundant room for the imagination and minds of men to move about. During the mediæval centuries there was movement in both life and art: there was noble and stirring development; but there was little change of direction. The middle ages ended when a principle of yet more untrammelled freedom came in with a rush: when a spirit of general challenge and scepticism, a longing for literally universal knowledge, invaded the world. Then the old order of religion, society, literature, broke up completely in a confusion from which we have hardly yet emerged. Compared with what went before, the middle ages were centuries of freedom; compared with what came after, they look to us like centuries of law.

II. Literary Conditions

The middle ages were most splendid when they were young, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were their time of greatest glory. But at this time, for special reasons, English literature did not yet exist.

English not yet mature.

The English nation was not yet born. For more than two centuries after the Norman Conquest, Normans and Saxons struggled in England for mastery in speech, not realizing that each was to find victory and defeat at once by union in one race, greater than either. Meanwhile, three languages were spoken on English soil. The court and the gentry talked French; the monks and priests liked their intercourse in Latin; and the unlettered throngs used still the despised Saxon. It was not till the fourteenth century that the English nation was ready for self-expression. We cannot pass at once to this century, however, for during all this time the growing nation shared the life of Europe and was formed by it.

European literature held in common.

In a broad sense, we may claim all that Northern Europe produced during this period of intense vitality as part of our English heritage. England and France were practically one country; and, indeed, no national boundaries were as yet very clear. Mediæval Europe almost realized Matthew Arnold's ideal: it was "for intellectual and spiritual purposes one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result." Poems and stories, starting no one quite knew where, wandered from land to land, chanted by minstrels in the castle court, transcribed by clerks in the monasteries, passing from language to language, gaining detail and chang-

ing form as they went, till to-day it is often impossible to tell where they came from or what the original form might have been.

Literature of secondary importance.

A vast amount of literature was produced during the middle ages in this impersonal, anonymous fashion. But there is one thing that we must realize before we begin to discuss it; that is, that the middle ages could express themselves in many other ways better than through books. Nowadays books have become the most natural and universal means of sharing ideas. It was not so before the invention of printing. If a man wanted to share an idea, or a story, or an emotion, he was not likely to write it out laboriously in a manuscript which only a few people would ever see, — and a great many could not read even if they had the chance: he would paint it, or carve it, or build it. Men learned almost everything then from the graphic arts. The visible world was alive for them with expressions of beauty, or solemnity, or fun. If great abstract ideas, even, came into their minds, they would translate them, as Giotto did at Padua, into a painted series of symbolic figures. If they wanted to tell a story from the Bible, or the life of their patron saint, it was easy to carve reliefs above the church door. If they wanted to explain a genealogy, they could design a Tree of Jesse, and put it in a stained glass window. If they had a great emotion, they lifted the solid stone heavenward, pierced it with light, placed a sanctuary at its heart, and lo! a cathedral!

III. Mediæval Life Pictured

We can only understand a period of this sort, which lived in sights, if we can contrive to see it. And we can see the middle ages if we will. We have two gifts which unseal our eyes, each useless without the other,—scholarship and imagination. Scholarship gives us the requisite knowledge, imagination turns it into sight. Even through books, which are all that most of us here in America have access to, we can learn a great deal, if we will take pains, about the aspect of those wonderful times.[1]

We can find endless records of processions, of pageants, of gay tournaments, of ceremonies within and without the churches. Even the common daily life of mediæval people was one great changing, moving picture. Everything they touched became picturesque, expressive, symbolic. The literature of the time constantly, as the phrase is, visualizes. We can learn from it all about the clothes of people, their looks, the country they lived in, the sort of landscape they liked. The works of Chaucer alone, for instance, are a perfect picture-gallery. Watch the procession of pilgrims in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales" if you would know how a motley, ordinary set of people in the fourteenth century really looked; study the dainty descriptions of allegorical persons in the "Romance of the Rose" if you want to find the mediæval ideal of beauty.

Visualizing instinct.

[1] Read, for instance, Froissart's account of the entrance of Queen Isabel into Paris, "Chronicles of Froissart," Vol. II, p. 383, Globe edition.

From such descriptions and from mediæval art we can learn just what personal types were most attractive to the middle ages. They had an entirely different ideal of beauty from that of the Greeks. They cared for masculine beauty, indeed, more than we do, and their men dressed almost as gayly as the women; but they placed an emphasis upon feminine loveliness which the world before the days of chivalry had never dreamed of. They liked blondes: a slender neck; long fingers; delicately arched eyebrows; eyes *à fleur de tête*, as the French say; full foreheads; flowing yellow hair, garland-crowned; a rippling nose; wide, thin, mysteriously smiling lips,—this was what seemed the highest beauty to mediæval eyes, this was probably the aspect of Guinevere as imagined by the age that created her. Ideal of beauty.

As for costume, it was delightfully varied and interesting in the middle ages. One can look at a modern crowd and learn very little about the people from their clothes; but one would know all sorts of things about the men and women in a mediæval crowd. One could tell just what a man did, for instance, from his dress; for while costume within the limits of a class was more uniform than with us, it differed wholly from class to class. It must have been a pleasant sight, that mediæval throng, with the bright colors, the graceful cut of the garments, the clearly marked types of knights, and squires, and merchants, and lawyers, and friars. Life was much more interesting to the eyes then than now. Costume.

It is harder to find out about mediæval buildings than about mediæval people from the books that Architecture.

have come down to us. But fortunately many of the buildings themselves are left, so that we know a great deal about them. Anybody who likes can study in beautiful photographs what kind of castles, and houses, and churches the middle ages loved to build. Like everything in the middle ages, the architecture of the times was picturesque, and interesting, and distinctive. This architecture is technically called Gothic; and the first impression which it presents is one of massive force contrasting with extreme delicacy, of mysterious use of shadow, of up-springing lines, of vast wealth in decorative detail. The very stones of a great Gothic building appear to live even in decay.[1]

Landscape. Mediæval landscape we can easily, again, reproduce for ourselves. We know what men loved; we know what they habitually saw about them. The country was still in large tracts wild and savage, overgrown with vast forests like those through which the knights in mediæval romance perpetually wander. Even so late as the time of Elizabeth, we know that one-third of England was unreclaimed waste land. Here and there the grim castle of a feudal lord, its thick walls and frowning turrets witnessing to the military character of the age, would break the monotony but hardly relieve the terror of the woods. Or, again, the sweet sound of unseen

[1] See, for a summary of Gothic characteristics, Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," Vol. II, Ch. I: On the Nature of Gothic. (Reprinted by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press.) "To my mind, and I believe to some others, this chapter . . . will in future days be considered one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century." — Morris's preface.

bells would draw the traveller to some spot where "a little lowly hermitage" or a stately abbey spoke of the mighty power of the Church. Of course, wide regions even apart from the towns were by this time subdued to human use and smiling fertility; yet the general character of scenery during the middle ages must have been wild and fierce. Men are governed by desire for contrast. We in our peaceful days crave precipice and savage height and raging torrent, and take our holiday pleasure in the wildest regions we can discover. It is, then, no wonder that people in the middle ages loved and sought in landscape all which was gently ordered, even, and serene. The mediæval idea of beauty is a garden-close. Flowering trees bend above its symmetrical walks, roses bloom there forever, and clear fountains softly splashing join in the melody of birds. In this garden pace fair damsels, a faint, perpetual smile in their gray eyes. Young squires and pretty pages move in attendance, and all take their joy together in the fresh sweet morning air of an undying May. Rocks and mountains cause abhorrent shudder to the mediæval mind. Dante's spirits in purgatory climb for their penance a lofty height; but because they are blessed, though once sinful, the mountain is laid out for them in neat terraces, and when they reach the top they will find that the peak has been smoothed away, and a delightful level garden planted for their refreshment. The wild primeval sense of fellowship with the stormy sea, which marked in so striking a way the rude literature of our Saxon forefathers, has also vanished. Nature is loved in the middle ages, but loved not for her

spiritual power, but for her fertility and peace. The treatment of landscape in mediæval art and literature is conventional and formal; it has no range of observation nor depth of insight, though it almost always possesses a charm of its own.

IV. Governing Forces

Society, during the middle ages, was shaped by two great forces, — feudalism and Catholicism. As we watch the mediæval world, two figures strike with increasing vividness upon our vision, and become more and more evident as the centres of the scene. They are the figures of the Knight and the Monk. They represent these two powers: the nobility and the Church. Each influences the other, yet they ever remain apart. Nearly all the literature of the middle ages, romantic or religious, proceeds from them or is written for them. Far in the background, indeed, we may discern another figure, that of the Laborer. He too has his word to say, and by and by we must listen to it; but for the present we will disregard him, as his own age disregarded him, and fix our sight on the literature related to those two more brilliant figures in whom the dominant influences of the age, chivalry and mysticism, found supreme expression.

The Church and the feudal order.

REFERENCE BOOKS

It is of great importance that the student should be able to see in his imagination what the middle ages looked like, and to get a little idea of mediæval life. Readings from the following books will help to this end: —

General Mediæval Life. Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, esp. Ch. XIV: Student Life in the

Middle Ages. GREEN, History of the English People, large illustrated edition. JUSSERAND, English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages. T. WRIGHT, Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages. TRAILL, Social England, Vol. II.

Costume. F. W. FAIRHOLT, Costume in England. PLANCHÉ, Cyclopædia of Costume. GEORGIANA HILL, A History of English Dress, Vol. I.

Landscape. RUSKIN, Modern Painters, Vol. III. F. T. PALGRAVE, Landscape in Poetry from Homer to Tennyson.

Architecture. CORROYER, Gothic Architecture. C. E. NORTON, Cathedrals and Cathedral Builders; Church building in the Middle Ages. RUSKIN, On the Nature of Gothic (reprint from The Stones of Venice: George Allen); The Seven Lamps of Architecture; Social England, Vol. II. Ch. V.

Popular novels are helpful to read: *e.g.*, SCOTT'S "Ivanhoe," VICTOR HUGO'S "Notre Dame de Paris," MORRIS'S "Dream of John Ball;" CONAN DOYLE'S "The White Company." Numberless admirable photographs are now readily accessible, and should when possible be freely used by the teacher.

Books of the period itself are better than critical authorities; even young students can read with pleasure, if guided, in the works of Froissart and Chaucer. These are a storehouse of pictures and so are all the mediæval romances, such as can be found in the publications of the Early English Text Society, in Weber's "Metrical Romances," and elsewhere; so is Langland's "Piers Plowman," though teacher can handle this more easily than scholar.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Two or three hours can be pleasantly spent in presenting examples of landscape, costume, buildings, on the lines given in the text; and at the end of the time a clear though rude picture of the times can be left in the student's mind. Special reports should be given, on material assigned with more or less detail according to the maturity of the class. Older students can be referred simply to a book, younger to especial passages. One can be asked to describe a knight, another a nun, another a mediæval forest, etc.; or, the different figures in Chaucer's Prologue, in the "Romaunt of the Rose," or in some romance, can be assigned to different members of the class. Popular novels can if desired be treated in the same way, and so can photographs.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The teacher may expand lectures on these same lines from a wider range of reading. Some special lecture subjects which would help a class to see the middle ages, are: "A day in a mediæval Market-place," "The life of a mediæval lady," "The mediæval Cathedral and what went on in it."

CHAPTER II

THE CHIEF PHASES OF MEDIÆVAL LITERATURE

I. CHIVALRY AND CATHOLICISM: THEIR LITERARY RESULTS

AROUND the knight gathers all the great literature of the middle ages inspired by the spirit of chivalry: love-songs, romances in verse or prose, a wealth of fantastic tales. It is a literature delightful as it is abundant. From the figure of the monk, all the religious literature of the middle ages seems to proceed, and this, too, is vast in bulk. Much of it preaches or discusses theology, — and mediæval theology is a great monument of human thought; but much of it is born of feeling and fancy, and the legends of the saints are as rich a storehouse of imaginative treasure as the romances of chivalry.

Literary forms: romance and allegory.

Romance and allegory are the distinctive forms in which mediæval imagination finds freest play, and they are the outcome of this double spirit of chivalry and Catholicism. Often the twofold inspiration appears in the same poem, and a compelling charm springs from the union. Often, however, the two are at odds. A zest for life in its freedom, a passion pushed at times beyond all restraining bounds, pervades the literature of chivalry; the literature of the Church, austere and ascetic, centres in the cold theme of renunciation.

The romantic temper.

Yet, even when most widely separate, all phases of mediæval literature witness fundamentally to a common temper. It is a temper of wondering expectation, of quick sensitiveness to marvel, natural or spiritual. This was the temper with which the knight rode forth into the greenwood, eager for adventure, whether with mysterious fair lady or loathsome dragon; this the temper with which the nun or hermit, in lowly cell, scourged the flesh till the heavens opened and revealed vision of Madonna or angels to the longing, watchful eyes. This temper we technically call Romantic, and, because of its prevalence, the middle ages are habitually known as the ages of romance.

The mind of the child helps us to understand the mind of the middle ages. A child is not scientific. He does not care to be accurate, he does not care to analyze. His reasoning powers are undeveloped, and feeling and imagination lead him. He is likely to be betrayed into extravagance and unreason, yet at times he sees more, perhaps, and more truly, than grown-up people do. It was just so with the middle ages. Men's souls were filled with wonder then; wonder at earth, at heaven, and at hell. "In wonder begins the soul of man," says a wise critic, "in wonder it ends; and investigation fills up the interspace."

All the conditions of the time increased this sense of mystery which brooded over the world. The rude and uncertain social state was full of surprises. The Crusades brought men close to the strange, fantastic civilizations of the East. Men's dim knowledge of the classic past enhanced the power which it exer-

cised over their imaginations, and turned the great poets of antiquity into clerks and magicians in their minds. Finally, we must not forget that at every turn they were met by the majestic presence of the visible Church, with its ceaseless witness to mysteries of a world unseen: mysteries of light and darkness, of salvation and of loss. It is no wonder if, over all the literature of the middle ages, whatever its specific character, the breath of the Spirit of Romance has passed.

Of very little in this great mediæval literature can we say that it was actually produced in England. But it was all known there. It helped to determine the tone, shape the manners, and establish the standards, of the growing nation. And, before the middle ages were over, much of it made its way into English translations, and sometimes found its noblest expression in them.

II. Literature of Chivalry

Let us glance now — it can be only a glance — at the great literature of chivalry. When the Norman came to the battle of Hastings with the "Song of Roland" on his lips, he was a stern and military person, caring little for the arts or graces of life, less for its tenderer emotions. But during the twelfth century he softened much. He cultivated good manners; he became not only a fighter, but a lover; he developed a taste for the arts. Love-songs began to be written then; gallant trifles, filled with fresh feeling for springtime and for the girls who embodied it. Little tales in prose, full of the same

lyric spirit, broke now and then into song, and became what we call the chante-fables, — a literary form of which a lovely specimen has survived, to our great joy, in the Story of Aucassin and Nicolette. We see in songs and tales how a new spirit of courtly fantasy was replacing the old zest for battle. But, far greater than this movement, interesting though it is, is the epic development leading into technical romance, of the Anglo-Norman period.

Epic cycles. There were four great cycles of mediæval romance developed in France, and therefore familiar to England. They took shape in the twelfth century. It is proof of the dominance of the Normans that the Beowulf story, with its Germanic affiliations, was forgotten in England, and the "Niebelungen Lied" had no vogue among the people who had first chanted of Sigurd. But these other cycles, branching out as they did into innumerable tales, often loosely connected with the central theme, had matter enough and to spare to feed the imagination.

Charlemagne. The first of these epic cycles was the cycle of Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers. The "Chanson de Roland," the earliest poem of the cycle, we already know; a certain magnificent and valorous audacity is ever the keynote of the tales. The second cycle centred in the story of Alexander the Great. It was presumably of Eastern origin, and it is full of the element of fantasy or magic. The third cycle came from the classic world; it was the ancient "Tale of Troy," strangely transformed indeed in the telling! The sympathy of the middle ages was with the Trojans. Troy became a quaint, walled, turreted town, such as may be seen in the background of

Alexander.

Troy.

mediæval illuminations. The element of romantic love was what most impressed the mediæval mind in the great story, and the most interesting result of the Troy cycle is Chaucer's winsome telling, after Boccaccio, of the hapless loves of two personages all but unknown to Homer, — Troilus and the coquette Cressida. The last great story which held the mediæval heart was the story of King Arthur; of the knights of the Table Round; of Lancelot and Guinevere; of Tristram and Iseult; and of the Quest of the Holy Grail. Differing in origin, all these stories were drawn into the one tale. In Arthurian romance, all the motifs of mediæval story meet and blend. Here is the perfect ideal of Christian valor; here the glamour of enchantment, Celtic and semi-Pagan at first in the tale of Merlin, Christian and Catholic later. Here chivalric love, alike in its nobler and in its baser aspect, finds immortal, if tragic, expression in the mournful, brilliant figures of Lancelot and Guinevere, of Tristram and Iseult. Here, finally, the mystic spiritual passion which throbbed at the heart of the middle ages glows forever in the veiled chalice of the Holy Grail.

Arthur.

As the middle ages go on, we can watch the great stories change in the telling. Slowly, imperceptibly, the rude epic strains gain color and sentiment, gain also an immense number of incidents and of details, but replace a primitive grandeur by an interminable prolixity and an absence of singleness of aim. Epic has changed into romance, and as romances finally we know and quote the stories. Sure proof at once of popularity and of decay, these stories early began to be parodied. Even in the twelfth century, the

Decline of epic on romance.

so-called beast-epics, especially the tale of Reynard the Fox, present a travesty of the serious work, and in an allegorical satire attack, under the form of different animals, all the powers of Church and State. Direct burlesques of the romances are later not unknown, as witness Chaucer's "Sir Thopas." Yet, during four hundred years, undeterred by ridicule or by the coarse realism which is also to be found in mediæval art, the mighty spirit of romance continued to overarch and to inspire the mediæval mind.

Arthurian romance.

Of all these cycles of romance, the greatest, that of King Arthur, is the one in which England had most share. Thence in all probability it started when the middle ages were young; thither for its perfect form it returned as they were dying. Far in the dim twilight of Celtic legend we catch glimpses of an heroic figure, partly mythological, partly perhaps historical, who bears the name of Arthur. In the Latin history of the Anglo-Norman, Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote in the middle of the twelfth century, we meet for the first time a developed

Forms and sources.

Arthurian legend. From English Geoffrey it passes to the Frenchman Wace. Early in the thirteenth century, it travels back again to England and receives the fullest treatment yet, and the first in the English tongue, from Layamon, a priest living on the river Severn. Meanwhile, in France the story has been growing fast and finding form in long romances. It has added to itself the branch which tells of Lancelot, the branch which tells of Tristram, the branch which tells of the Holy Grail. Thus enriched, Arthurian romance travels all over Europe: to Italy, to Germany; finds shape in many tongues;

but returns at last to England, where, in the end of the fifteenth century, all the different branches of the story are condensed to one-tenth of their original bulk, brought into epic unity, and told in language of wonderful purity and romantic beauty, by Sir Thomas Malory.

Development.

It is most interesting to watch the great story grow. In Geoffrey of Monmouth we have few traces of the Arthur we know. We are introduced to a warrior chief, who fought twelve battles with the Saxons and the Romans. Merlin is in the story, and, briefly treated, Guinevere; but we have no knights, no Table Round, no Holy Grail, and dreary records of fighting fill the bulk of the tale. In Wace, the spirit of chivalry is evident, and the Table Round is added. Layamon surrounds the birth and passing of Arthur with fairy enchantments, and thus adds that glamour of mysticism and magic which is so large a factor in the charm of Arthurian romance. But it is only with the entrance of Lancelot, in the French romances, — which were perhaps written by an Englishman, Walter Map, — that the crude fighting retires into the background, and the ill-starred, unhallowed love of Lancelot for Queen Guinevere furnishes the dramatic motif which is to the middle ages what the tale of Helen was to the ancient world. The wild story of Tristram and Iseult, with its Celtic magic, its Celtic sympathy with nature, its Celtic fierceness of emotion, enhances and emphasizes the presentation of the tragedy of lawless passion which destroys the Arthurian court. Then comes the story of the Holy Grail, bathed in purest moonlight, silver-wan, in contrast to the flood of hot sunshine which

seems to beat upon us in the Tristram story. Here spiritual passion, never in the middle ages far from the greatest excesses, finds full sway, in the mystic quest for the Holy Thing, wherein all the knights engage; the semi-Pagan figure of Merlin is lost to sight, and a Christian supernatural element appears, created by the ceremonial and the sacramental faith of the Catholic Church. Asceticism struggles with the terrible force of human passion, seeking to expiate and to redeem. Routed in Lancelot, it conquers in Galahad, his son, the youthful knight, fairest product of the purely Christian imagination, in whom the two forces of chivalry and mysticism blend at last in a union of surpassing beauty. But Galahad is borne far over the sea to the spiritual city of Sarras, there to reign and die; the Holy Grail vanishes with him; earthly passion resumes its sway; and through deepening shadows the story moves majestically onward to the death of Arthur, Guinevere, and remorseful Lancelot, and the disruption of the Table Round.

Character. Through many centuries the story grew, but grew unconsciously, into an imaginative unity far more marvellous than had it been the product of any one man. It is the epic of mediæval humanity, and all of natural and spiritual passion which the middle ages contained are summed in it. Sin-stained and smitten to a tragic close, the story still purifies and exalts. In its entirety, it presents with inexorable grandeur, severe as that of Greek drama, the slow retribution which attends on broken law. As it progresses, it enshrines, more fully than any other mediæval work, the very ideal and image of perfect

knighthood. Reading the pledge to which all the knights of the Round Table are sworn, we realize how altered and enriched is the ideal of heroism since the days of Beowulf, or even of Roland: —

"Then the king stablished all his knights, and them that were of lands not rich he gave them lands, and charged them never to do outrage nor murder and always to flee treason. Also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their mercy and lordship of King Arthur for evermore; and alway to do ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen succour upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrongful quarrel for no law nor for world's goods. Unto this were all the knights sworn of the Table Round both old and young. And every year were they sworn at the high feast of Pentecost."[1]

Love and loyalty toward women; courtesy; modesty; the code of honor even in mortal combat; above all, a compassion for the weak and the conquered hardly conceivable by the Pagan mind, — all these things have entered the conception of a perfect manhood. Much remains to be done, as we shall see, watching the growth of the nation, before the ideal of absolute heroism as we hold it to-day shall be formed; yet in some ways it is a question whether we moderns have surpassed, or even equalled, the ideal of Arthurian chivalry; and we still thrill with a large and pure admiration as we listen to that summing up of all chivalry, the words pronounced over the dead body of Lancelot by his brother, Sir Hector: —

"Ah, Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all Christian knights; and now I dare say, said Sir Hector, thou

[1] Malory, "Morte D'Arthur," Book III, Ch. 15.

Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand; and thou were the courtliest knight that ever bare shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword; and thou were the goodliest person ever came within press of knights; and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."[1]

III. Literature of Catholicism

The Romances of the Holy Grail are perhaps the noblest imaginative expressions of the religious ideals of the middle ages. But there exists, as we have already said, an immense amount of literature from these centuries, produced or appropriated by the Church. It is mostly in Latin, the Church language. It consists of sermons, moral treatises, and the like; but it also consists of stories, for to gain the mediæval ear it was obviously necessary to have a tale to tell. The two most important collections of these religious or quasi-religious stories are the "Golden Legend" and the "Gesta Romanorum." It seems strange to rank the "Gesta Romanorum" with religious literature, for the book is simply an immense collection of tales with all sorts of origin, Oriental, classic, as well as mediæval, often far from edifying, and hard to reduce to a moral. But the times did not shrink from the task, and each story is followed by an allegorical interpretation, deducing lessons of

[1] Malory, "Morte D'Arthur," Book XXI, Ch. 13.

Christian faith and morals from the most unlikely details. Probably most readers skipped the morals; but at all events they stand there, a warning for all time to the lover of allegory, and a witness to the audacity of the Church in sanctioning what people were bound to have whether she would or no.

The "Golden Legend" is a collection of a very different character: it is almost wholly occupied with the legends of saints, some of them of great beauty, others puerile and tedious, and it is a perfect treasure-house still to any one who wants to understand the play of Christianity on men's minds. It was, of course, far more read than the Bible, for we must remember that neither in England nor elsewhere was the Bible read by the laity at this time; and the religious ideas of the middle ages were probably more formed by this collection of tales than by any other influence.

We cannot stop to enumerate other productions in religious mediæval literature, but we must mention what is in some ways the greatest of all, — the hymns in Latin, the "Dies Iræ," the "Stabat Mater," St. Bernard's "Rhythm of the Celestial Country," and the rest. They are the noblest lyric works of the middle ages. In them we can see the old prosody of the classic age gradually breaking up, yielding to a new music necessary to express a new range of experience and feeling. They have what is too often denied to the vast literature of the middle ages — conciseness and beauty of form; they have an exaltation and delicacy of passion which puts them among the great poems of the world.

The literature produced during these centuries in

English, and the growth of the language in which Shakespeare was one day to write, we must study in the next chapter.

REFERENCE BOOKS

SAINTSBURY, The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory. W. P. KER, Epic and Romance. MILLS, History of Chivalry. The Accolade, by HELEN GRAY CONE, in Oberon and Puck, is a poem which tells with power of the initiation of the young knight, and his dedication to his ideals.

MALORY'S Morte D'Arthur, scholar's edition, with full critical apparatus, edited by OSKAR SOMMER. Popular editions, The Temple Classics (Dent), 4 vols. Library of English Classics (Macmillan), ed. by A. W. POLLARD, 2 vols. JOHN RHYS, Studies in the Arthurian Legend. NEWELL, King Arthur and the Table Round (chiefly translations from Chrétiens de Troie). SEBASTIAN EVANS, The High History of the Holy Grail (translation from twelfth century French romance). The Early History of the Holy Grail, Early English Text Society. Syr Perceval, Thornton Romances, ed. by HALLIWELL-PHILLIPS, also in Kelmscott Press publications. Peredur, Geraint, in the Mabinogion, tr. by LADY CHARLOTTE GUEST. The Prose Merlin (fifteenth century), Early English Text Society. Arthurian books in Geoffrey of Monmouth. ALFRED NUTT, Studies in the Origin of the Holy Grail. G. V. HARPER, The Holy Grail (Modern Language Association), Vol. VIII, p. 77. The Golden Legend, Temple Classics; Selections, ed. by H. D. MADGE (E. P. DUTTON). Tristram and Iseult, tr. by JESSIE WESTON (NUTT).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The majority of the books mentioned above are popular and attractive to young people. An ordinary class had better spend all the time it can give to the literature of chivalry in reading Arthurian romance, including the legends of the Holy Grail. A good introduction is to learn by heart Tennyson's poem, "Sir Galahad." It is suggestive to compare the treatment of one episode, as the story of Elaine, or the passing of Arthur, in Malory, and in the "Idylls of the King." A vivid idea of the meaning of chivalry should be aimed at. To this

end let each student follow the fortunes of one knight, as Perceval, Gawain, Palamides, Lancelot, Gareth. Show how each illustrated the ideal of chivalry; how he failed. Compare, in class discussion, the knight as hero with the Pagan warrior, Beowulf, Siegfrid. Show how the ideal of heroism is developing. Have we to-day advanced beyond this ideal? Bring to class, if possible, copies of Abbey's Grail frescoes in the Boston Public Library.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

(See references above.) Mythological Elements in Arthurian Story. Origin and Early Forms of Arthurian Romance. The Epic Development of the Morte D'Arthur. The Education of a Knight. A Day in a Knight's Life. The Legends of the Holy Grail (see translation by Jessie Weston of Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Parzifal"). The Influence of the Worship of the Mediæval Church on the Imagination.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE PRODUCED IN ENGLAND

I. Work in French and Latin on English Soil

IT is strange to pass from the copious literature produced in French and Latin during the early middle ages to the silence of the English. For three hundred years after the Norman Conquest, nothing very great or beautiful, nothing, we may dare to say, which, from the point of view of art, has much power to interest us, was written in the English tongue.

We must not think, however, that the barrenness of literature in English is quite the measure of the production of the nation during these centuries. In the great European confederation, "bound to a joint action and working to a common result," it is impossible to determine exactly the share taken by England; but we do know that certain of the most interesting books written during this period in French or Latin were produced either on English soil or by men of English birth. Geoffrey of Monmouth has been already mentioned. He was a Welsh bishop; and his Latin "History of the Kings of Britain," written nearly a hundred years after the Conquest, witnessed to the deathless vitality of the Celtic spirit, and became to the world for hundreds

Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. about 1154).

of years, indeed till after the time of Shakespeare, the very well-head of Romance; Lear and Cymbeline are met in this book, as well as Arthur. A little before Geoffrey's day, more sober historians, of whom the chief was William of Malmesbury, escaped at times the dry manner of the mere chronicle, and achieved something of that breadth of view and luminousness of handling which makes history a branch of true literature. The "Gesta Romanorum," that vast story-book, was probably compiled in England toward the end of the thirteenth century. In French, the "Lais" of Marie de France, who, despite her title, spent much of her life in England, are among the most important examples of the light verse-story. High in rank at the court of Henry II, lived a brilliant, elusive, interesting person named Walter Map. He, too, was a Welshman; and since he wrote the curious medley of satire, story, and fun called "De Nugis Curialium," he must have been one of the cleverest men of the middle ages. But perhaps he was a great deal more than this, for to Walter Map many critics assign the authorship of some of the noblest mediæval romances, the Romance of Lancelot, and certain of the Romances of the Holy Grail. If Map wrote these romances, he was a very great man, and England possesses an author second only to Dante in fervor of imagination, large inventiveness, and spiritual passion, though, of course, far below Dante in power of utterance. But whether Map really wrote any or all of these Romances, we do not know. That some of the Romances, however, were shaped by Anglo-Normans, it is safe to assume.

"Historia Regum Britanniæ," 1147.

William of Malmesbury (d. after 1142).

Marie de France; last half of 12th century, reign of Henry II.

Walter Map (d. 1210).

II. The Growth of the English

The English silence.

But most, if not all, of these writers came from the new French strain in English life; and the native Saxons were strangely unrepresented in letters. A few sermons, homilies, paraphrases of the Scriptures, legends of the saints, — a harvest of lyrics, charming indeed, but late and slender, — this is all the English-speaking people have to show during this long time. For three hundred years is a very long time, longer than our whole American national history. During a longer time than English-speaking folk have possessed the American soil, the voice of Englishmen was stilled.

Some writers talk as if the Norman Conquest were responsible for this long stretch of silence. They talk as if the best traditions of our literature were in the days of Cædmon and Cynewulf, and as if we moderns should do well to return thither alone for inspiration. How false this point of view is becomes evident if once we reflect that the Norman Conquest by no means choked or suppressed a flourishing literature. Since the time of Alfred, the Anglo-Saxon race had had little or nothing to say; since the eighth century, it had felt no impulse to great creative poetry. For some reason its development seemed to be arrested, and we may believe with M. Jusserand that, had the Normans never come to England, the English might have been as slow in producing a literature as their German cousins, whose national life did not blossom into imaginative expression till modern times. Probably in the long run the Norman Conquest really

accelerated and stimulated, if, indeed, it did not create, the power of self-expression in England.

Formation of the language.

But, naturally, for a time literature could not be written in English, because the English language did not yet exist. To shape that language, — to prepare an instrument for Shakespeare, for Milton, for Wordsworth, — was an achievement worthy to engross the activities of many a generation. The old Anglo-Saxon was dying, the English was not yet arisen. Meanwhile, the conditions were unfavorable for literature. The chief value of the scanty literary memorials of this period which we possess is for linguistic study; their chief interest is the light they throw on the different stages in the gradual growth of English speech.

The process.

When the Anglo-Saxons conquered the Celts, they conquered their language, and only a few Celtic words found their way into our modern speech. When the Normans conquered the Anglo-Saxons, just the opposite thing happened, "For about two or three hundred years, the French language remained superimposed upon the English; the upper layer slowly infiltrated the lower, was absorbed, and disappeared in transforming it. But this was the work of centuries."[1] The process is most interesting to follow. The nobles, the ruling class, spoke French, the poorer, simpler people, Saxon. But as time went on, the "lowe men," the rustics, wanted to learn French too, both from social ambition and for convenience' sake. "Their efforts had a remarkable result, precisely for the reason that they never succeeded in speaking pure French, and that in their

[1] Jusserand, "Literary History of the English People," p. 116.

ill-cleared brains the two languages were never kept distinctly apart. The nobles, cleverer men, could speak both idioms without confounding them; but so could not these *rurales*,[1] who lisped the master's tongue with difficulty, mixing together the two vocabularies and the two grammars, mistaking the genders, assigning, for want of better knowledge, the neuter to all the words that did not designate beings with a sex, in other words, strange as it may seem, creating the new language. It was on the lips of 'lowe men' that the fusion first began; they are the real founders of modern English."[2]

The result.

The Anglo-Saxon had been an inflected language; that is, the words had changed their form, to show their relation to the thought and to other words in the sentence. Our modern English has cast off inflections, for the reasons that M. Jusserand suggests in the quotation just given; inflections were too confusing to manage when two languages were blending their different forms. English shows the relation of words and the part they play in the sentence by putting them under the control of other words, which seems to us much the simpler and better way. But, disregarding inflections, the structure of English is Anglo-Saxon, not French. Nearly all the homely words which do the heavy work, the servant-words, like auxiliary verbs, articles, pronouns, connectives, which are repeated over and over again in any page of writing, are Saxon. But if the structure of our language is Germanic, the vocabulary, the embroidery upon the plain tissue, became to a surprising

[1] Country people.

[2] Jusserand, "Literary History of the English People," p. 236.

degree French, and through the French it gained much of the rich expressiveness of the old Latin. No other modern language draws its power of expression from so many racial sources as the English. Counting word for word, our debt to the French and Latin tongues is the heaviest. English contains twice as many words drawn from these languages as from the Germanic; though, of course, in any given passage, this proportion would probably be more than reversed, because the Saxon words are, as we have said, those which have to be repeated again and again, and because many of the words of French-Latin origin are seldom used. If we study our vocabulary we may get a vivid picture of the state of society while our language was forming; for the words of the arts and graces, the pastimes and intellectual pursuits of life, are usually French, while the words of humble practical toil and of family bonds and affections are mostly Saxon. Often, in the strife of tongues, the old Saxon word would be routed and disappear: thus "courteous" or "polite" drove out "hende," "brave" drove out "frek," and the like; sometimes the Latin word is the more common, as is the case with "color" and "hue," "use" and "wont," but this is rare. In a strife of tongues like that which we are watching, our sympathy almost inevitably goes sometimes with those that fall; and we cannot help regretting some of the strong, simple, old English words that have been worsted in the fight. They have a direct and homely dignity quite different from the ornamental, many-syllabled stateliness of the French and Latin derivatives. "The Ayenbite of Inwit"

will seem to many of us a more expressive thing than "The Remorse of Conscience," though the two mean exactly the same. "Wanhope" touches the heart-strings with a sadder note than "despair"; while "blee" for complexion, "fere" for companion, "ferly" for marvellously, "dree" for endure, "gryl" for horrible, "stour" for conflict, "gram" for indignation, "foreward" for covenant, "wort" for vegetable, have the strength of brevity. Most of these old words are gone past recall. Some lingered late, cherished by poets and simple provincial people, — one remembers Milton's "rathe primrose." Many have become degraded, as "ghost," of which the original meaning of "spirit" still lingers in the phrase "Holy Ghost," and "silly," of which the original meaning was "innocent" and so "blessed." Some people are trying to revive certain of these racy old words to-day: "mirkness," "thews," "croft," "leachcraft," "stead," and the like. Perhaps they will succeed. But, however much one may love the old Saxon, no sane man can regret the enrichment of English by the countless words of French extraction which the growing nation needed for its self-expression and took to its heart. Take away from any long passage of Shakespeare or Tennyson all the words of French origin, and we see at once what grace, variety, expressiveness, flexibility, the English owes to the graft of the Norman-French upon the Saxon.

III. Literature in English

Now let us tell the short story of English letters during these three centuries, — from the middle of

the eleventh century to the middle of the fourteenth, — dwelling for a moment on the few interesting works. We must remember that there was no uniform English yet, and that they were all written in some local form, or dialect. There were three principal dialects, of which Chaucer was to exalt one, the Midland, to the rank of English. To the end of the twelfth century, that is for half the period, there is really nothing worth mentioning here. A long "Poema Morale" corresponds to its name; it is a rhymed, didactic poem, in the old elegiac religious strain of mournful brooding, familiar to the Anglo-Saxon. At this time, the Normans were writing love-songs and romances: "The victor sings, the vanquished prays." But at the beginning of the thirteenth century we meet a really delightful and important book. This is Layamon's "Brut." We had a little to say about it when we were talking of Arthurian romance. It is not, in one sense, an original work. After the frank fashion of mediæval good-fellowship, which claimed common ownership for all men in a good thing, Layamon borrowed his story of the legendary history of England from Wace. But he tells the story very well, with many poetic additions. He was a priest, living on the Severn, not far from the borders of Wales, and the Celtic enchantment is in his work. He wrote in a strongly Saxon style, which recalls the old hero-sagas; only fifty French words are to be found in his whole poem, and his metre is alliterative, with only occasional rhymes. Yet the French influence is strong in him, showing itself in a certain gay courtliness, in magnificence of description, in a spirit of

"Poema Morale," possibly during reign of Henry I, 1100–1135.

Layamon's "Brut," about 1205.

chivalry and romance which pervades the whole. Thus he was sensitive to all three elements which entered the life of the completed nation, and his "Brut" may almost be called the first poem of the whole English people.

Horn, about 1250, and Havelok, 1270–80.

One or two romances probably of Danish origin took shape during the thirteenth century: the stories of King Horn, and of Havelok the Dane. They got into the English forms we know, however, through French originals, and show marks of their passage. A good deal of writing, religious in inspiration, both verse and prose, was also produced in this century: sermons, homilies, lives of saints, paraphrases of the Scriptures. One of the most important of these works, and extremely interesting for linguistic study,

The "Ormulum," about 1215–1220.

is the "Ormulum," a collection of paraphrases of the gospels for the day, interspersed with comments and allegorical interpretations, written by the priest-monk Orm. Only one-eighth of it has come down to us, but that eighth extends to ten thousand lines. Another interesting book, in prose, is the "Ancren Riwle," a kindly but severe book of instructions for the guidance of three young anchoresses.

The French romances of the preceding century began to get into English versions during the thirteenth century. But the one really beautiful and charming thing which this century produced was

Lyrics, last half of 13th century.

a little group of lyrics. They can be read in the fourth volume of the publications of the Percy Society. The freshness of the young life of the nation is in them. They are the first poems in English literature to evince the instinct for pure loveliness of form. Despite their quaint archaic language,

they sing themselves to us as they must have done to their first readers : —

"Lenten[1] is come with love to town,
With blosmen[2] and with briddes[3] roune,
That all this blissë bringeth;
Dayes-eyes in the dales,
Notës sweete of nightingales,
Each fowl song singeth."

The first line of this poem might serve as motto for the whole group. Spring has indeed "come with love to town," and spring and love and the fairness of sweet ladies form the burden of these little songs. They sing, also, with the same grace and music, in a strain of tender adoration of Christ and Mary; and they sing of these great sources of mediæval feeling, — love mystical and chivalric, — in words which blend three languages in naïve reflection of the strange state of things in the nation : —

"Scripsi hæc carmina in tabulis!
Mon ostel est en mi la vile de Paris:
May y sugge[4] namore, so wel me is;
Yf hi deye for love of hire, duel[5] it ys."

So trills the poet, with a little sense of mischief and saucy defiance; and again, in gentler and reverent mood : —

"Mayden moder milde,
oiez cel oreysoun;
From shame thou me shilde,
e de ly malfeloun.

There is but a handful of these lyrics, and every one is worth reading. One of them has a lovely refrain : —

[1] Spring. [2] Blossoms. [3] Birds. [4] Say. [5] Devil.

"Blow, northerne wynd,
Send thou me my suetyng.
Blow, northerne wynd, blow, blow, blow!"

"Here," says Mr. Saintsbury, "is Tennysonian verse five hundred years before Tennyson. The 'cry' of English lyric is on this northern wind at last; and it shall never fail afterwards."

Moving down the generations, we have reached the fourteenth century. It was a time when the middle ages were a little over-ripe in Europe, and the first flush of creative power had faded. Architecture, costume, politics, social life, all showed a tendency toward that exaggeration and intensity which is a symptom of decay. But in England the times had not yet come to their own, and the nation was yet waiting its poet. For over half the century expression did not occur. Books multiplied, indeed, but they were on the old lines. Religious homilies and legends in verse and prose, — some very genuine in the devout meditative earnestness which had from the first marked the English, one collection, the "Cursor Mundi," a treasure house of legendary lore; a handful of political poems by one Laurence Minot; an increasing number of translations and paraphrases, — these are all that we find till the second half of the fourteenth century is passed. Almost, it seemed that the land of England was to lie fallow all through the great experiences of the middle ages, producing nothing of note. But so it was not to be. For hundreds of years secret forces had been moving in darkness toward creation. The new people, as soon as it had achieved unity, as soon as it was ready to

"Cursor Mundi," about 1300.

Poems of Laurence Minot, about 1350.

take its place among the nations, was to find a voice; and at last, in the second half of the fourteenth century, we meet with the first great English poet, the "maister deere and fadir reverent" of all who were to come after, — Geoffrey Chaucer.

REFERENCE BOOKS

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH. J. A. GILES, Six Old English Chronicles. WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY. J. A. GILES, ed., Bohn's Edition.

LAYAMON'S Brut, edited, with translation, by SIR FREDERICK MADDEN.

MORRIS and SKEAT, Specimens of Early English, I, II. Gives selections from most of the English works mentioned in the text.

T. R. LOUNSBURY, History of the English Language. A. C. CHAMPNEY, M.A., History of English. G. P. MARSH, Lectures on the English Language; The Origin and History of the English Language. JENS O. H. JESPERSEN, Progress in Language, with special reference to English.

The publications of the Early English Text Society afford ample material for the study of the most interesting monuments of the language.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Readings from Geoffrey of Monmouth and from Layamon are profitable and interesting. Much or little language study can be done. A valuable exercise is to select a good passage from Shakespeare, Milton, Charles Lamb, Matthew Arnold, or any other good author, and make the students track the words to their origin by the help of the Century Dictionary, studying the proportion and character of the words from each linguistic source.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRE-CHAUCERIAN PERIOD

Century	Literature in English	Literature in French and Latin probably written in England	Continental Literature	English History, etc.	Continental History, etc.
1066	"Exeter Book": Presented to Exeter Cathedral by Leofric, the bishop, in 1073. (A miscellaneous collection of early poems.)	Ælfric: "Vita Ethelwoldi." Eadmer, 1066–1122: "Historia Novorum"; "Vita Anselmi." Lanfranc, d. 1089: "Liber Scintillarum," 1080. Anselm, fl. 1093–1109: "Monologium"; "Proslogium"; "Cur Deus Homo? De Voluntate"; "De Concordia præscientiæ Dei cum libero arbitrio."	"Chanson de Roland." "Mystery of the Ten Virgins." "Finnish Epic of Kalevala" (?) "Old French Lyrics" (?) "Chansons d'Alixaundre," 1050–1150. Roscelin. Raoul de Houdenac. "The Verse Edda."	Battle of Hastings, 1066. William the Conqueror, 1066–1087. Feudal System in England. Domesday Book completed, 1086. William Rufus, 1087–1100. Durham Cathedral begun. Westminster Hall and London Bridge built.	Order of Knights of St. John, or Rhodes, 1048. St. Etienne (Caen), begun by William the Conqueror, 1066. Peter the Hermit, 1071–1115. Abelard, 1079–1142. Bruno founds Carthusians, 1084. Rise of Scholasticism. First Crusade, 1095–1099.
1100	"Early forms of the Havelok Saga." (From Gaimar's account this saga was definitely settled in its main outlines as early as the beginning of the twelfth century. The passion of love plays almost no part in it, a sign of its early origin.)	Florence of Worcester, d. 1118: "Chronicon ex Chronicis." Thomas of Ely: "Historia Ecclesiæ Eliensis." Athelard of Bath: "Quæstiones Naturales"; "De Eodem et Diverso"; "Translation of Euclid."	Turpin: "Chronicle of Charlemagne." William of Poitiers, first troubadour, 1071–1127. Trouvères and Jongleurs. Joachim of Fiore, 1130–1202.	Henry I, 1100–1135. Conquest of Normandy, 1105–1106. Wool manufactured in England. Lincoln Cathedral rebuilt, 1123–1147.	St. Bernard, 1091–1153. University of Bologna, 1116. Knights Templars founded, 1118. Persecution of Jews. Averroës, 1120–1198.

"King Horn"—Germanic in origin.

"Peterborough version of the English Chronicle." (Begun in 1121, ended about 1154.)

"Poema Morale": A moral ode in rhymed verse, probably in reign of Henry I; very popular.

Early forms of the "Proverbs of Alfred." ("Our present form is a recension of the thirteenth century.")

"Waltheof Saga." ("The English saga of Waltheof is lost.")

Ordericus Vitalis, 1075–1143: "Ecclesiastical History"; "De Contemptu Mundi."

William of Malmesbury, 1095–1142: "De Gestis Regum Anglorum."

Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1110–1154: "Historia Regum Britanniæ," 1147.

John of Salisbury, 1110–1180: "Polycraticus"; "Metalogicus."

Hilarius, fl. 1125: "Three Latin Dramas."

Simeon of Durham, d. 1130: "Historia de Gestis Anglorum."

Henry of Huntingdon, fl. 1135–1155: "Historia Anglorum."

Walter Map, 1143–1210: "De Nugis Curialium"; "Golias"; "Launcelot du Lac" (?); "Queste de St. Graal" (?); "Mort Artus" (?)

Geoffrey Gaimar, fl. 1147–1151: "Estoire des Englois."

Giraldus Cambrensis, 1147–1216: "Expugnatio Hibernicæ"; "Topographia Hiberniæ"; "Descriptio Cambriæ."

Luces de Gast, 1154–1189: "Tristram."

Benoist de Ste. Maure, 1154–1189: "Roman de Troie"; "Roman de Normandie."

"Nibelungen Lied," ab. 1140.

Minnesingers.

"Epic of Gudrun."

Robert de Boron: "Joseph d'Arimathie"; "Merlin"; "Grand St. Graal"; "Artus."

"Aucassin et Nicolette."

Vidal.

Bertrand de Born.

"Roman de Renard."

Maurice de Sully, 1160–1196.

Geoffroi de Villehardouin, 1160–1213.

"Reinaert," 1170.

Walther von der Wogelweide: ab. 1170–1235.

Gottfried of Strasburg: "Tristrem."

Hartmann von der Aue.

Snorro Sturleson: 1178–1241.

Moses Maimonides: "Guide

Stephen (Blois), 1135–1154.

Battle of the Standard, 1138.

Civil War: 1139–1142.

Cistercians bring about religious revival.

Abbeys founded in the North.

Henry II (Plantagenet), 1154–1189.

Murder of Becket, 1170.

Croyland Abbey built.

William of Sens (a) begins choir of Canterbury Cathedral, 1175–1178.

Fair Rosamond and Queen Eleanor.

William the Englishman (a) continues the choir of Canterbury Cathedral, 1179–1184.

Glanvill, Chief Justice, 1180.

Richard Cœur de Lion, 1189–1199.

Guelphs and Ghibellines, 1140–1495.

Arnold of Brescia, fl. 1140–1155.

Second Crusade, 1147–1149.

Campanile at Pisa.

Peter Lombard, d. 1164.

The Waldenses, 1170.

St. Dominic, 1170–1221.

Leaning Tower of Pisa begun, 1174.

Insurance introduced into Europe by the Jews, 1182.

St. Francis of Assisi, 1182–1226.

Reference to Compass by Guyot of Provence, 1190.

Third Crusade, 1190–1192.

Teutonic Order of Knighthood established, 1191.

Siege of Acre, 1191.

Innocent III, 1198.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRE-CHAUCERIAN PERIOD—*Continued*

Century	Literature in English	Literature in French and Latin probably written in England	Continental Literature	English History, etc.	Continental History, etc.
1100		Wace: "Brut d'Engleterre" (1155); "Roman de Rou" (1170). Joseph of Exeter: "Bellum Trojanum." Alexander Neckham: "De Naturis Rerum." Alfred of England: "Translation of Æsop from Arabic." Hélie de Boron: "Tristram" (second part); "Meliadus." Nigel Wireker: "Brunellus." Michael the Scot: "Musa Philosophica."	to the Perplexed," 1190.	Massacre of Jews. John Lackland, 1199–1216.	
1200	Layamon: "Brut," ab. 1205. It is written in the alliterative metre of the Anglo-Saxons, but with occasional rhymes. Orm: "Ormulum," ab. 1215–1220. "The Ancren Riwle," ab. 1225. ("A manual of piety for the use of women who wish to dedicate themselves to God." According to Jusserand, the original text may have been a French	Robert Grostête, 1175–1253: "Chastel d'Amour"; "De Cessatione Legalium." Roger of Hoveden, fl. 1201: "Annales." Roger Bacon 1214–1292 (?): "Opus Majus," 1263; "Opus Minus"; "Opus Tertium." Marie de France: "Lais"; "Fables d'Isopet." Roger of Wendover, fl. 1235: "Chronica." Alexander Hales, d. 1245: "Summa Theologiæ."	"Spanish Poems of the Cid." Raymond in Languedoc. Wolfram von Eschenbach: "Parzival." Albert of Stade: "Troilus." "Trojumanna Saga." Brunetto Latini, 1230–1294. "Prose Edda," 1241.	University of Oxford (migration from Paris ab. 1167. No recognized chancellor before 1214). Stephen Langton, abp. 1207–1228. Papal Interdict, 1208–1213. Magna Charta, 1215.	University of Paris, 1150–1170 (?) First Statutes, 1210. Fourth Crusade, 1200–1204. University of Siena, 1203. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, 1207–1231. Mendicant Orders.

1200	one, but if it was not, this is the first of the original treatises written in England after the Conquest.)	Bracton: "De Legibus Angliæ," 1256–1259. Duns Scotus, 1265–1308: "Distinctiones"; "Quæstiones quod libetales"; "Logicalia." John de Oxenedes, fl. 1292: "Chronicle." William Rishanger: "Chronicle"; "De Bellis Lewes et Evesham."	William of Lorris: "Roman de la Rose," 1250. "Floire et Blancheflor"(?) John of Capua: "Directorium" (Fables of Bidpai). "Dies Iræ" (?). "Earliest Spanish plays and lyrics."	(Confirmed and renewed thirty times, 1216–1608.) Henry III, 1216–1272. Coming of Black Friars (Dominicans), 1221. Coming of Gray Friars (Franciscans), 1224. University of Cambridge, ab. 1231. Ed. Fitz-Odo (a), Master of the Works at Westminster Abbey.	Albigensian Crusade, 1208–1229. Fifth Crusade, 1216–1220. University of Naples, 1224. Thomas Aquinas, 1227–1274. University of Padua, 1228. Dominican Inquisition established, 1233. Tuscan, Umbrian, Venetian, and Paduan Schools of Painting. Margaritone d'Arezzo (p), 1236–1313. Cimabue (p), 1240–1300. Hanseatic League, 1241–1669.
	"The Wooing of Our Lord." (A prose treatise, similar in theme to "The Ancren Riwle.") "The Soules Ward." (A religious homily.) "The Bestiary." (A collection of allegorical tales in which the vices and virtues are impersonated by animals. The celebrated	"Gesta Romanorum."	Sordello, fl. 1260.	The Mad Parliament, 1258. Provisions of Oxford, 1259. Barons' Wars, 1262–1266. Battle of Lewes, 1264. Commons summoned to Parliament, 1265.	Cathedral of Amiens. Sixth Crusade, 1248–1250. The Sorbonne, founded 1252.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRE-CHAUCERIAN PERIOD — *Continued*

Century	Literature in English	Literature in French and Latin probably written in England	Continental Literature	English History, etc.	Continental History, etc.
1200	animal epics are probably a development from the old bestiaries.) "Story of Genesis," ab. 1250. (An English song, deriving its material from the Bible, and from the "Historia Scholastica" of Petrus Comestor, a French priest.) "Story of Exodus." "Lives of St. Margaret, St. Juliana, and St. Katherine, and others." (These illustrate the might of virginity.) "The Holy Maidenhood." (An alliterative homily.) "Visio Pauli" ("Eleven Pains of Hell." Visions of heaven and hell, very popular in the middle ages.) Thomas of Hales (a Franciscan monk): "Luve Ron," a love song. Nicholas of Guildford: "The Owl and the Nightingale"; a dispute between the two birds. "The first instance in		Guido della Colonna, fl. 1270–1287.	Battle of Evesham, 1265.	Marco Polo, 1256–1323. Giotto (p), 1266–1337. Venetian glass made, ab. 1268.

1200				
	English, of the famous contests in verse, already long current in French literature." "Song of Horn." "Havelok the Dane." (Adapted in this form from the French. But originally an English saga.) "Guy of Warwick." "Floriz and Blanchefleur." "King Alexander." "Sir Tristram." (Adapted, imitated, or translated from French romances.) Thomas of Ercildoune (?): "Reynard." (The English version of the famous animal epic, Reynard the Fox.) "Dame Siriz," before 1270 (?) (From a French fabliau.) "Land of Cockayne." (Imitated from the French satirical lyrics.) "Debate of the Carpenter's Tools"; "Debate of the Soul and Body": (Imitations of the French lyric disputes.) "Metrical Legends of the Saints," ab. 1280–1310.	Dante, 1265–1321. "Vita Nuova," ab. 1294. "La Divina Commedia," begun about 1307. Jean de Meung, b. 1280. J. de Voragine: "Legenda Aurea." Early French drama. J. Tauler, 1290–1361.	Edward I, 1272–1307. Statute of Mortmain, 1279. Wales subdued, 1282. Statute of Merchants, 1284. Public clock at Westminster, 1288. Interregnum, 1290–1292. Expulsion of Jews, 1290. John Baliol, fl. 1292–1296. Final organization of the English Parliament, 1295. Battle of Falkirk, 1298.	Albertus Magnus, 1193–1280. Seventh Crusade, 1270. Strasburg Cathedral. Cathedral of San Lorenzo, Naples. Sicilian Vespers, 1282. University of Lisbon, 1290. League of the Forest Cantons, 1291. Boniface VIII, fl. 1294–1303. Palazzo Publico, Siena, 1295–1327. Duomo, Florence, founded 1298.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRE-CHAUCERIAN PERIOD — *Continued*

Century	Literature in English	Literature in French and Latin probably written in England	Continental Literature	English History, etc.	Continental History, etc.
1200	"Northumbrian Psalter." (Translation of the Psalter in English verse.)				
1300	"Proverbs of Hendyng." (Collection of proverbs, imitated from the French proverbial poetry.) Robert of Gloucester: "Rhyming Chronicle, from Brutus to Edward I," 1298. (?) "Metrical Lives of Saints," 1300. "Short Lyrics." Robert Mannyng of Brunne: "Handlyng Synne," 1303: a metrical translation of the French "Manuel des Pechiez," of William of Waddington. "History of England," 1338. "Otinel." "Amis and Amiloun." "Cursor Mundi," 1320–1325. (A metrical version of the Old and New Testaments, interspersed with lives of the saints.)	William Occam, 1300–1347: "Quodlibeta septem"; "Summa logice"; "Expositio aurea"; "Disputatio super Potestate Ecclesiastica." Peter Langtoft. "Chronicle" (in French), 1307. Nicholas Trivet, d. 1328: "Annales sex Regum Angliæ." N. Bozon: "Contes Moralisés." Richard of Bury, fl. 1344(?): "Philobiblion," a book about books. (Richard was a collector of books.) Bradwardine, d. 1349: "De Causa Dei." R. Higden, fl. 1352: "Polychronicon."	Wartburg Tournament of Song. Petrarch, 1304–1374. Boccaccio, 1313–1375: "Teseide." "Decameron," 1350. Floral Games at Toulouse, 1323.	Battle of Roslin, 1302. Robert Bruce, 1306–1329. Edward II, 1307–1327. The Lords Ordainers draw up articles of reform, 1310. Battle of Bannockburn, 1314. St. Alban's Abbey. William of Wykeham (a), 1324–1414. Edward III, 1327–1377.	First rag paper ab. 1300. Parliament of Paris, 1302–1771. University of Orleans, 1305. Mariner's Compass on pivot. Fall of the Templars, 1307–1310. Duguesclin, 1314–1380. Berthold Schwartz, (Gunpowder), 1320. University of Pisa, 1338.

1300	William of Shoreham (?), fl. 1320–1325. "Seven Sacraments." "Joys of the Virgin." (His poems may be called treatises in rhyme.) Richard Rolle of Hampole (a lay preacher), fl. 1330–1340. "The Prick of Conscience," written in Latin and Northumbrian English for the "unlearned." With the exception of the doubtful case of the Ancren Riwle, he is the first English prose writer after the Conquest, who can pretend to the title of original author. "Boke to an Ankoresse." "Cycle of Metrical Homilies," ab. 1330. ("As in the south there was a legend cycle, so in the north there was a cycle of homilies, comprehending the Church year.") Michael of Northgate, ab. 1340. "Ayenbite of Inwyt" ("Sting of Conscience." Prose translation from the French.)		"Theologia Germanica." Fra Guittoni: Early Italian Prose. Dino Campagni: "History of Florence."	Peace of Northampton, Scotland recognized, 1328. Winchester Cathedral. New College, Oxford. Lantern Tower and Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral. French replaced by English in the schools. First apothecaries in England, 1345. Glass windows in general use, 1345. Battle of Crécy, 1346. Cannon at siege of Calais, 1346. Calais taken, 1347.	Election to Empire declared independent of Papacy, 1338. The Free Companies, 1342. Chimneys in Venice, 1347. University of Prague, 1348. Rienzi, fl. 1343–1354. Notre Dame, Paris, finished, 1351.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRE-CHAUCERIAN PERIOD — *Continued*

Century	Literature in English	Literature in French and Latin probably written in England	Continental Literature	English History, etc.	Continental History, etc.
1300	Laurence Minot, "Songs on Battles of Edward III," to 1352. (Being ten war lyrics.)		R. Malespini. J. Villani, d. 1348. M. Villani, d. 1363. P. Villani, d. 1404.	First appearance of the Black Death, 1349. Statutes of Laborers, 1351.	Swiss confederation, 1351. Bolognese, Spanish, German, and Flemish schools of painting.

1. The distinctive features of the literature of the twelfth century are the Latin Chroniclers in England, and the rise of the great cycles of romance.

The Chroniclers, at first mere annalists in the monasteries, became, in this century, men of the court, with a personal knowledge of politics and foreign affairs. We owe to them our acquaintance with the history of these years. Their works also display a certain philosophical insight.

2. The great cycles of romance were: —
   The Charlemagne Cycle.
   The Alexander Cycle.
   The Troy Cycle.
   The Arthur Cycle.
   The Nibelungen Cycle.
   The Cid Cycle.

All these originated on the Continent except the Arthur Cycle. They grew with astonishing rapidity to an enormous size.

3. In France along with the romances were rising the lyrics, sung by the Trouvères, and later to be translated and imitated in England.

These lyrics were varied in character; some were hymns, others were secular love-songs, others again were satiric.

4. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries are the centuries of the crusades.

5. The thirteenth century is marked by the rise of the great universities all over Europe.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century the Renaissance had already begun to be foreshadowed in the art of Italy.

6. The first half of the fourteenth century is glorified by the great names of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

7. The following abbreviations need explanation: —

(a) = architect.
(p) = painter.
b. = born.
d. = died.
fl. = flourished.
ab. = about.

CHAPTER IV

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer, about 1340–1400.

THOUGH the middle ages were old in the fourteenth century, the English nation was young; it was only just born. And Chaucer, the first poet of the great united English race, has a heart as fresh as a child. His work is bathed in the pure sunlight of a May morning; it is dewy like the "dayës-eye," to which he used to pay happy visits, watching its little petals awake and unfold at dawn. We have left our long study of origins and ancestors, of a nation struggling for expression, behind; we reach a time when all that had been given by Saxon, by Norman, and by Celt, blended into one national temperament; and just at this time the mysterious, unaccountable, heaven-sent light of genius, shining through the soul of Chaucer, showed the world what that union meant.

Any one who wishes can read Chaucer, —

"Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled,"

as his disciple Spenser rightly called him. He is the first author we have met whose work can be understood without study. There is no need to be master of archaic forms or strange grammar to catch the essential charm of his poetry. The new language, the English we all talk, slips musically off his tongue, disguised a little, to be sure, by quaint

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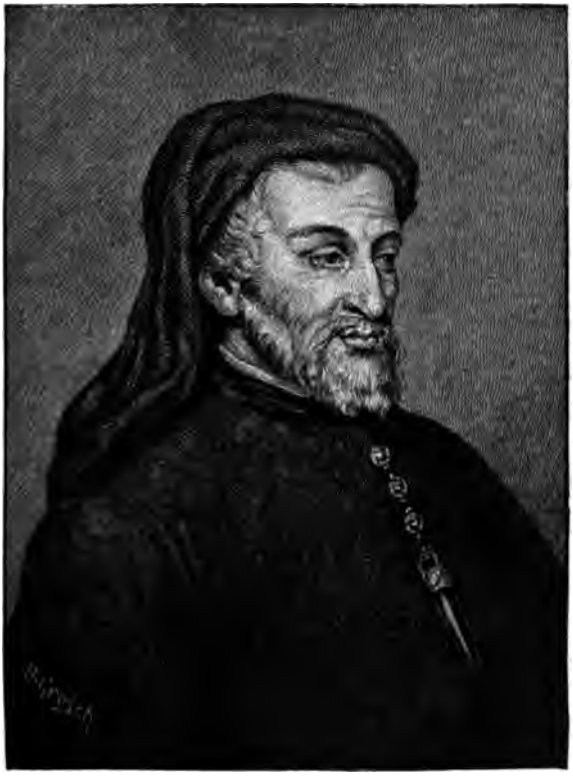
old spelling, and presenting, now and then, an unfamiliar word, but, on the whole, wonderfully modern and simple. It is well worth while to take the slight trouble necessary to enjoy him. Of course, there is a scholar's knowledge which lies beyond, and cannot be gained without further effort; but any ordinary person, after an hour or two of preliminary practice, can feel the poet's spell, and receive much of the best and most delightful that he has to give.

I. Chaucer's Writings a Summary of the Middle Ages

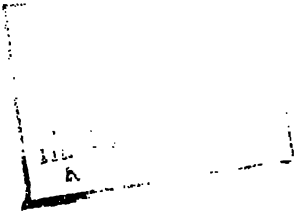
All the literary types which the middle ages developed and enjoyed Chaucer made his own and touched with his sweet, peculiar charm. These types can really be studied to more advantage in his writings than anywhere else. Let us look for them there.

Allegorical poems. In the first place, Chaucer had the mediæval power of dreaming. Several of his most important poems are in the form, so dear to the mediæval mind, of allegorical visions. He likes to tell how he would pore over "oldë bokës," his delight, till he fell asleep in a maze, and waked in vision into a wonderful temple or the clear air of a spring woodland, and met marvellous persons, and had strange experiences. All these allegories, this visionary work, show that Chaucer belonged to the same century as Dante.

Saint legends. Chaucer could write a saint legend too, as tenderly and fervently as any monk; witness the "Lyf of



GEOFFREY CHAUCER
1340-1400



Seinte Cecile," put into the mouth of the Second Nun in the "Canterbury Tales," and the Prioresse's touching story. But our poet is more at home in chivalry than in mysticism, though he likes a poetic miracle very much. His "Knight's Tale" is the most delightfully told of any mediæval romance. He could turn around when it pleased him, though, and make fun of romances, as we see in his amusing parody, "The Rhyme of Sir Thopas," which he insisted on droning out to the Canterbury Pilgrims till the Host cut him short.

Romances.

Again, Chaucer took his full part in the mediæval pastime of telling over again, in a way to please his own generation, the famous stories of the classic world. His poems are steeped in all the classical lore of which the middle ages could boast. Sometimes he got his stories direct from Ovid or Virgil, sometimes they came to him through the Italian. Wherever Chaucer touches the classics, — and he touches them frequently, — he shows the quaint, uncritical confusion of the mediæval mind, dressing the person, the feelings, and the speech of his characters in the garb of his own day.

Classic tales retold.

In poems like "The Parlement of Foules," and the "Nun's Priest's Tale," Chaucer clearly shows his indebtedness to those great animal epics which, as we have said, were immensely popular all through Europe during the middle ages. No one can make the creatures talk and play an allegorical rôle in satire and fun with more composure than he. The farmyard story of the Nun's Priest is indeed simply an offshoot, and a very enjoyable one, from the great Reynard tale. Chaucer also owed obviously a great

Animal stories and fabliaux.

deal to the Fabliaux ; the light, colloquial folk-tales which the Normans liked so well, — often coarse, usually humorous, dealing with the manners and customs of daily life. The fabliaux were a very democratic form of literature, quite different from the knightly romances, or the fine allegories dear to the court; and the tales told by the common folk on their way to Canterbury, by the Miller, Reeve, and Shipman, and others, are fabliaux translated into terms of English common life.

Other types.

We have not exhausted yet the various literary types to be found in Chaucer, though perhaps we have mentioned the most important. Chaucer could give series of versified examples of the fates of illustrious men or women, or their misfortunes, after a fashion which the middle ages seem, curiously enough, to have enjoyed ; this he did, for instance, in "The Monk's Tale." He could write a sermon too, — not a bad one, though as dull as any priest could preach ; and for Chaucer to be dull was really a triumph of art over nature. He could write a scientific treatise for "litell Lowys, my sone." There seemed to be no end to his versatility, in form and matter. Allegory, romance, saint-legend, animal-epic, fabliau, — Chaucer knew them all, drew on them all.

Chaucer rarely invented a story. He wandered for his originals all over Europe, from east to west. Yet there is a great deal in Chaucer, and it is what makes him immortal, that no "oldë bokës" could give him. All his borrowings do not prevent him from being a great original poet. This is because he managed to do what few of his predecessors had

done: get his own personality into his work. At times, he turned away from his literary traditions and inheritance, deserted his books, and drew from life; then he is at his very best. The Prologue of the "Canterbury Tales" is drawn from no literary tradition, but is all his own. Even when his material is derived or copied, he reveals himself through his treatment. And it is a humorous, healthy, child-like, tender personality, at once sensible and sensitive, that the poems show us.

II. Chaucer's Personality

We have a portrait of Chaucer which is probably authentic, painted reverently from memory by order of his disciple Hoccleve. We gain various hints also of what the poet looked like, and quite full information about his tastes, from his poems. The Host in the "Canterbury Tales" tells us that he was big and stout round the waist; that he kept staring on the ground, "as if he would find a hare"; that he did dalliance to no wight, meaning, probably, that he kept rather quiet and by himself; and that he was of an "elvish countenance." One can see the shy yet kindly man, with his downcast looks, moving unobtrusively among the noisy pilgrims. Traits.

In spite of his shyness, Chaucer must have been a sociable person, who liked his fellow-men and mingled much with them; he could not have described them with such inexhaustible sympathy otherwise. But he was a great bookman, too, and that meant more in those days, when books were rare and hard to find, than it does to-day. He makes amusing

blunders in his scholarship sometimes, but like Shelley and other great imaginative men, he had in him the root of the matter: a keen delight in the intellectual inheritance of the race.

Though he liked books so well, however, there was one thing he liked better, and that was, out-of-doors. He cared enough for nature to get up early to enjoy the freshness of the day, and that is more than can be said of most people nowadays. His special love among flowers was the daisy, and he tells us: —

> "In my bed there daweth me no day
> That I nam up and walking in the mede,
> To seen this floure agein the sonnen sprede,
> When it upryseth early by the morrow,
> That blisful sightë softeneth al my sorrow."[1]

The nature that Chaucer liked was not wild nature, mountains and cataracts and tossing seas, such as we go far to seek to-day. He probably felt about such things in the way that one of his characters, Dorigen, in "The Frankleyn's Tale," does about rocks; though poor Dorigen, to be sure, had a special reason; —

> "Eterne God, that through thy purveyaunce,
> Leddest the world by certain governaunce,
> In idle, as men seyn, ye nothinge make:
> But, Lord, these grisly, fiendly rockës black,
> That semen rather a foul confusion
> Of werk, than any fair creatioun
> Of such a parfit wise God, and a stable, —
> Why have ye wroght this werk unresonable?"[2]

[1] "The Legende of Good Women," II, 46–50.
[2] "The Frankleyn's Tale," II, 865–872.

He liked what all mediæval men liked: sweet spring mornings, as that on which Palamon and Arcite first see Emelye; well-ordered gardens and tidy woods,

> "Wher every tree stood by himselve,
> Fro other wel ten feet or twelve."

He dearly loved green grass, —

> "as thicke y-set
> And softe as any veluet,"

especially when dotted with fragrant flowers. Sometimes on a morning like this a vision would visit him, perhaps of the God of Love himself, arrayed in green embroidered silk, with a fret of red rose leaves, the freshest since the world was first begun; sometimes he had to content himself with hearing, —

> "The smale briddes singen clear
> Their blisful swetë song pitous,"

as lovely as the song of angels spiritual. His joy in nature is that of a child delighting in bright detail of form and color, yet sometimes curiously inaccurate in observation. We feel as we read his fresh poetry that here, at least, blossoms forever the springtime of the world.

Chaucer had his clear preferences, in-doors as well as out. Everybody likes to imagine a pretty room for himself, but not all of us can even dream of one so beautiful as Chaucer's, which had painted windows, gay with the whole pictured story of Troy, and frescoes beside on the walls, painted with colors fine, both text and gloss, and all the "Romaunt of the Rose." He was a man of the fourteenth century, and so the best of life came to him through his eyes.

He was full of wonderful powers of perception and of fresh sensibility, and he had a well of melody in his soul; but when he began to reflect he was more than ever like an earnest child.

Biography.

It is quite time that we should turn to a review of his life and work. Chaucer was probably born in 1340, six years before the battle of Crécy, and he was not, like so many mediæval authors, connected, even remotely, with the Church; nor did he belong to the high order of knighthood, though he lived near the bright chivalry of the court. His father was a vintner, a plain man of business. Nevertheless, Chaucer had all the instincts of the aristocrat. He was at seventeen attached to the family of Lionel, third son of Edward III, and we know, by the way, that he had a pair of red and black breeches. Despite his broad sympathies, this early training determined largely the point of view which he never lost, that of the man of culture, the man of the world. Later, John of Gaunt, a great nobleman, another son of Edward III, became his patron; and he married, probably before he was thirty years old, a girl named Philippa, who also was markedly under the protection of the court. But earlier than this Chaucer had some stirring experiences; for he went to France with Edward III and fought an unlucky campaign when he was about nineteen years old, was taken prisoner by the French, and ransomed by the king himself. The young page must have become a person of some consequence. We find signs a little later of the favor in which he was held at court. He was valet of the king's chamber; he received a pension; he was appointed

to honorable and profitable positions, such as comptroller of customs and clerk of the king's works. They were business positions, these last, and we have evidence that Chaucer took them seriously, and made a shrewd, honest, competent business man, despite his dreamy habits. But perhaps the most important influence which his relation to the court brought into his life was that of Italy. To this fair country he was sent by the king two, perhaps three, times between his thirtieth and his forty-fifth year on diplomatic missions. He must have been a man to trust. Wonderful things were happening in Italy just then. The middle ages were older far than in England; they were disappearing fast. In their place a new world was arising, a world full of enthusiasm for the great learning and letters of antiquity, full of a new passion for art and beauty. Ancient Greek and Roman statues were being discovered at Pisa, and quickening a new ideal in the minds of artists. Giotto's Campanile at Florence, one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, was almost new, and Chaucer must have gazed on it. Dante had died more than fifty years ago, but the two other great men of the fourteenth century in Italy, Boccaccio and Petrarch, were both living, and Chaucer may have met them both. From the time of these Italian journeys dates the real ripening of his genius, and his debt to the great Italians is patent in all his poems.

Chaucer's fortunes declined in his later life. At one time, after his wife's death, he was even, it would appear, in great straits for money, and miserable and unhappy therefore. A half-humorous, half-pathetic

"Compleynt to his Purs" seems to have softened the heart of the king, Henry IV, who in 1399 granted him a small pension. But Chaucer did not need the pension long, for in 1400 he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, first of the great line of poets, to Tennyson and Browning, whose bodies lie there sleeping. With him died the childhood of England.

On the whole, his must have been a happy life: full of color, interest, privilege, of contact with the best people and the most delightful things the times could offer. It is a proof of Chaucer's great heart and great genius that he became, not the poet of the court, as he might so easily have been, but of the whole English people. We should need no other evidence, indeed, of the depth of his English sentiment than the bare fact that, while all his compeers at the court were using French, he chose to write in the tongue of the plain people.

III. Chaucer's Work

French period.

While he was still young and under French influence, Chaucer translated the poem which had more vogue than any other in mediæval Europe; the French "Romaunt of the Rose." Most of Chaucer's "Rose" is probably lost to us. There is a charming poem, a translation of part of the French poem, bound in with the editions of his works; but critics tell us that none of it can be his, except, perhaps, the first 1705 lines, and just possibly the conclusion. A few other poems have come down to us from what is known as Chaucer's French period; the most important is "The Deth of Blaunche the

Duchesse," or, as it is sometimes called, "The Book of the Duchess." This poem was composed to lament the death of the young wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt. It is full of prettiness, of sentimental grace, of the mannerisms then popular; but through its conventional phrases we can see a real sorrow, and it contains a lovely, carefully wrought description of ideal womanhood. All the work of this period is delicately serious, it is full of echoes; it has no touch of the delightful humor and the direct observation that Chaucer afterward developed.

Italian period.

After he had travelled under Italian skies, and breathed airs from the past and the future, Chaucer's genius deepened. His heart, which had lingered in sentiment, began to master the secrets of passion, and his imagination learned to soar into a region far loftier than he had yet explored. "Troilus and Cressida," which he wrote at this time, adapting and improving from Boccaccio's epic, the "Teseide," is more than a charming and exciting story; it is a study in character and feeling. We know all the people in it; the bewitching Cressida, the melancholy Troilus, and the fat, garrulous, kindly, low-minded old Pandarus, Cressida's uncle, who brings the lovers together. Chaucer's large modernness of manner and his humorous understanding of character appear for the first time in this poem.

Chaucer wrote, during this same period, "The Parlement of Foules," a sprightly, pretty allegory of bird life, in which he returns to the French art-tradition; he wrote also "The Legende of Good Women," interesting as an attempt to put a number

of separate tales together in a sort of dramatic setting. It has a lovely prologue, but Chaucer found the stories monotonous and left the poem unfinished. He wrote now also what is perhaps the loftiest flight of his imagination, "The Hous of Fame." It is a splendid thing, a very vision. And yet, through it all, though it sweeps us up into the sky, Chaucer's imagination does not really leave the earth. Life earthly, not life spiritual, preoccupies him. The critics say that Chaucer was profoundly influenced by Dante, and there is evidence in his poems that he read and honored the great Florentine. But his "Hous of Fame" is neither in hell nor heaven, nor on the steep purgatorial mount; it abides in the free sky of pure fantasy. The humane and literary influences of Italy played upon his genius, not its strange mystic fervor. He is brother in spirit to Boccaccio, not to Dante.

English period.

During all these earlier years of his life, Chaucer was writing from time to time a story which he afterward worked into the framework of the "Canterbury Tales." And now he turned away from masters, and found himself: the first great Englishman to show us the new England. The "Canterbury Tales" were the work of his ripened genius, in the last fifteen years of his life. The poem tells how a company of pilgrims rode together in the April sunlight to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, telling stories by the way, and chatting to one another. It was quite the fashion to find some setting, in this way, into which a number of stories could be fitted. The other most famous example comes from Italy: it is the "Decamerone"

Canterbury Tales.

of Boccaccio, and it tells how a company of gay young men and women fled from plague-stricken Florence once upon a time, and in the rose-gardens on the hill forgot that sorrowing city, whiling away their time with love-making, romance, and song. Something of Italian intensity, something of frivolity too, is in that scheme. Chaucer's is more English, happier, more healthful. It gives us the pleasant sense of onward movement; we feel the jogging, leisurely advance of the horses as the motley crowd pass between the April hedgerows, entertained by the incidents of the way, and listening to one story after another. Pilgrimages played an important part in mediæval life. They might be a means of mortification, and an expression of spiritual passion; they might be a delightful social function, a way of enjoying the pleasures of travel. Chaucer's pilgrims were sincerely religious, but they were also having a splendid holiday. Who can blame them? All England was in a holiday mood just then, full of zest for adventure and experience.

The pilgrims, gathered together by chance, met first of an evening at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, London; and a mixed assemblage they were. There are nine and twenty of them, and Chaucer is of the company, and goes about making friends so vigorously that before bedtime he knows them all. So does the Host of the inn, a merry man and a fair burgess. He it is who is the godfather of the "Canterbury Tales," for his is the proposition that they should tell stories on the morrow as they ride, and that the best story-teller be rewarded by a supper at the common cost on their return from pil-

grimage. He was a sly innkeeper, mine host; we may be sure that the supper would not have been "good cheap." Meanwhile, he will ride forth with them on the morrow, and show them the way; and in the fresh morning light forth starts the company.

As we watch them, mediæval England passes before us. It is impossible to help talking about these people as if they were real, so vivid has Chaucer made them. We notice the Knight first. To read about him is like meeting a knight in life after knowing him in romance, and we are glad to find that this is a very perfect gentle knight, valiant and courteous, a gentleman and a peacemaker, worthy to be a Fellow of the Table Round. His son is with him, a curly-haired young squire, beautifully dressed in fresh embroidered clothes; he can sing and play the flute and write poetry and dance; he can make love, too, and hotly, otherwise his education would be incomplete, and his pretty head is full of romances; he is courteous, lowly, and serviceable, and deferential to his father, as he ought to be.

Then there is a yeoman, dressed in green, with a brown face and close-clipped hair; and a Lady Prioress, a most delicate person, a little affected, very courtly and well-bred: a real fine lady. She sings through her nose, though, Chaucer tells us, and the French she speaks so fluently is not Parisian, as we are slily informed; she has another nun and three priests with her. Then comes a monk. He is a pleasant, vigorous gentleman, but not especially unworldly; the bells on his bridle as he rides are more agreeable to him than the bells of a chapel; he enjoys a fat roast swan, and is devoted to hunt-

ing. Various churchmen ride on Chaucer's pilgrimage, and he gives us a very unpleasant picture of them. We would like to think that he picked out bad specimens, in his Friar, his Summoner, and his Pardoner; we are glad to remember, as we read about them, that Wyclif was preaching about this time. But all these painful studies are redeemed by the beautiful picture of the poor parish priest, who rides with the pilgrims, silent for the most part, but protesting humorously when the Host grows over profane. It is an exquisite study of simple, loving consecration, of Christian poverty and love: —

> "Christë's lore and his apostles twelve
> He taught, but first he followed it himselve,"

says Chaucer.

Sundry professional people are in the company: for instance, a clerk or scholar of Oxford, who looks hollow and soberly, and is in threadbare clothes. He did not care, Chaucer tells us; he spent every penny he could get in books and learning. There is a lawyer, a busy man, but one who seemed busier than he was; and a doctor whose study, alas, was full little on the Bible. There are men of business, a merchant, a reeve or bailiff, a manciple or steward, and a Franklin, a good, vigorous man from the country, with a complexion as fresh as a daisy. And mingling with the fine people are a number of common folk with quite shocking manners, who seem hail-fellow-well-met with every one on this happy holiday: a miller and a cook and a sailor and a carpenter, and other working people, and a Wife or woman of Bath, whom it is really remarkable that the Prioress could

tolerate, though our loss would have been irreparable indeed if she had not gone on that pilgrimage. Then there is the jolly stout Host, with his bright eyes. And finally, a demure, quiet-looking man named Geoffrey Chaucer.

It is in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales" that we are told all about these people, and this Prologue, with its broad, loving, merry descriptions of the world he saw, is Chaucer's best title to immortality, better than all the sweet and graceful romancing of his early years. But now come the stories, linked together by little dramatic interludes. The pilgrims are having a beautiful time. No one is in a great hurry to arrive at the shrine. This is their holiday, and when they get back there will be a supper. The stories that they tell are immensely varied, and in almost all cases fit exactly the characters who tell them. They alternate in a rough and ready fashion, from serious religion and romance spoken by the gentry, to tales of broad rough humor told by the more common folk. Some are better than others, and some we hardly care to read to-day; but we need to take them all together if we would understand mediæval England. We can mention only a few of the stories here.

The Knight tells the first tale; and a "noble storie" it is, as all the pilgrims agree, a story of love, and war, and honor. It tells how Palamon and Arcite saw from their prison, and loved, the fair Emelye as she walked in her garden, and of all the sorrows and adventures that thence befell. The story is taken from Boccaccio, and Chaucer had already told it once, in a version lost to us, but this

time he has told it supremely well. The Miller and the Reeve follow the Knight, and their coarse stories, though they can give no one pleasure to-day, are wonderfully well told. It is difficult to see why the Man of Law should tell the story of Constance, except that Chaucer had the story by him, and wished to insert it somewhere. On the other hand, the story of the little singing martyr boy is excellently put into the mouth of the Prioress, who joins with modest pleasure in the tale-telling, when timidly and awkwardly invited by the Host. As for Chaucer himself, it is with sly humor that he represents himself as telling first the parody on Romances, "Sir Thopas," and then, when the Host, bored beyond endurance, interrupts him, the "little thing in prose," the interminable "Tale of Melibœus." The Nun's Priest must have been a merry man, for he tells the delectable tale of Chaunteclere the Cock and his wife, Dame Pertelote; and Chaucer's humor never found more gay expression than in the description of the strutting cock with his splendid comb and resplendent legs, and the hen whose beauty he adores, she is "so scarlet red aboute her eyen." The tales of the Friar and some of the others are far from pleasant, but so are the speakers. As for the Wife of Bath, with her scarlet stockings and her bold face, riding astride her horse with her large hips, she is an immortal picture; and her candid outpouring of confidence in the prologue to her tale is the most living evidence we have of what life meant in the fourteenth century to a hearty, vulgar Englishwoman of the middle class. We are a little surprised, after her revelation of herself, that

she tells a charming story of fairy lore; but, after all, she comes from just the class where such lore lingered longest. The Clerk of Oxford tells the famous, tender story of Patient Griselda. The Squire is only twenty years old, and he loves marvel and sentiment, and tells — but his story is unfinished — the tale in the name of which Milton sought to summon Chaucer from the dead: —

"The story of Cambuscan bold."

The Second Nun has a fervid religious legend, the "Life of Saint Cecilia"; a Yeoman who joins them in the most dramatic interlude of the poem has, not a story, but a bitter outpouring of anger against his whilom master, a Canon who practised alchemy and cheated the unwary. Finally, as the pilgrims come near Canterbury their mood sobers, and the last Tale, as the series stands, is no tale at all, but a long, simple, devout sermon, preached by the Parson, which we will hope edified the drunken Miller, the Cook, and the Wife of Bath, as well as the Clerk and the Knight, and prepared them all for their devotions.

So the series, not half finished, comes to an end. Chaucer had meant, at first, to have each character tell two tales on the way out and two going home. Not half that number was written.

IV. Chaucer's Art and Place

Chaucer's Art.

We said that it was the revelation of his own personality that gave undying charm to Chaucer's poetry. Perhaps it is only another way of saying

the same thing to say that his charm is due to his perfect art. For art is personality set free. Of the substance of his work and its spirit we have perhaps spoken enough; but we ought to say a little more about the great work that he did in producing his poems in beautiful form. His strength lies, of course, in his power to tell a story. Chaucer had an art which the middle ages before him had rarely possessed; he knew what to leave out. Mediæval romances trail along with insufferable prolixity from incident to incident, and often move to no particular end. Chaucer had the instinct for unity and for brevity. He selected only the significant, and he stopped when he reached an end, which is one of the greatest arts in the world. There are, for the true lover of poetry, few superfluous lines or even words in the "Canterbury Tales." And then Chaucer could get the music in his soul into his verse. Like his own Friar, he could "make his English sweet upon his tongue." He brought into the new language all the daintiness and lightsome grace of the French. He discarded the heavy dignity of the old alliterative line, and used rhyme. He tried various stanza forms and handled them with a harmony all his own, though they were often borrowed from contemporary French writers; but he was most at home in the rhyming ten syllable couplet, which ever since his day has been one of the favorite instruments of English verse. His music is light, sweet, faultless, very pure. No one since has quite caught his magic, though William Morris has pleasantly imitated it in some of the poems of his "Earthly Paradise."

Chaucer's relation to past and future.

We call Chaucer our best representative of the middle ages; yet his work is full of subtle suggestions of a civilization still to dawn. In many points his temperament was not that of his own day. There was nothing of the mystic in him; his romance was superficial, not ingrained; only when he reaches the broad and kindly realism of the Prologue is he really and fully at home. His feet never started upon the Quest of the Grail, nor was he visited by even a fleeting vision of the holy thing. Spiritual mysteries did not attract him; he was not troubled by speculations about the next world.

> "His spirit changed house and wente there,
> As I cam never, I can not tellen where."[1]

These brief words, in which he dismisses the soul of the dying Arcite, sum up his theology; it is not the common attitude of his time, which, though not always speculative, was sensitively conscious of a spiritual world pressing very near the world of matter. But Chaucer was a child of this earth, and he saw it as very good. He loved the homely human qualities: cheerfulness, loyalty, honor. He had a tender heart even for people who practised very few of the virtues, on the simple score of their humanity. In this love of the earth, in his responsiveness to beauty, in his enthusiasm for learning, in the slightly critical tone which tinges his work, and finally in his unerring instinct for perfection of form, he suggests the characteristics of the time that was to come. Evening star of the middle ages, morning star of the Renaissance — all honor to him, best of English

[1] "The Knightës Tale."

story-tellers, first Englishman who combined imaginative vision with beautiful English speech.

REFERENCE BOOKS

W. SKEAT, Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 7 vols. Students' Edition, 1 vol. A. W. POLLARD, Ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Globe edition.

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Clarendon Press edition of Prologue and Knight's Tale, Nonne's Preste's, Prioress's, Monk's, Clerk's, Squires's Tales, the Rhyme of Sir Thopas, and many of the minor poems.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The more that can be read of Chaucer the better. The "Prologue," "The Knight's Tale," "The Nun's Priest's Tale," are best for beginning, with selections of biographical interest from the minor poems. Close consecutive discussion of text is the best method to draw near to a great author. Chaucer's humor, Chaucer's feeling for nature, Chaucer's sentiment, Chaucer's characterization, Chaucer's vocabulary, Chaucer's rhythms, Chaucer's attitude toward the Church and churchmen, and various other topics, may be made the themes of special discussions.

CHAUCER'S WORKS

It may be broadly stated that the sequence of Chaucer's writings, as given below, finds general acceptance, though many individual dates are doubtful. It is also generally agreed that Chaucer's work falls into three periods, — the first that of his apprenticeship, when his life at court brought him under the influence of French models; the middle period, when his diplomatic missions had brought him strongly under Italian influence; the third period, that of the "Canterbury Tales," in which Chaucer has clearly become master of his own "English" style. The middle period will contain all the longer works previous to the "Canterbury Tales." Some critics, who consider that the "Canterbury Tales" were finished within a comparatively few years, count the last decade of Chaucer's life, which would then show but a few minor poems, a period of decline.

Of the existing version, the part known as *A* is held by many to be of Chaucer's early work.	The Romaunt of the Rose. See text.	
Usually placed before 1369, and called the first original work extant. Yet some high authorities, 1369–1371.	The Compleynte unto Pite.	Earliest example of the famous Chaucer stanza, or "rime royal."
About 1369. Ten Brink, 1374.	The A B C.	An alphabetical prayer to the Blessed Virgin based upon a similar "A B C" in a book by Guillaume de Deguilleville, a French Pilgrim's Progress of the fourteenth century.

(In regard to the three poems above, there is little agreement among authorities as to date, whether they are to be placed before or after the "Dethe of the Duchesse.")

Soon after 1369.	The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse.	Opening incident, "Ceyx and Alcione," from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Whole form of the poem French.
About 1374, perhaps earlier.	Lyf of Seint Cecyle.	Later assigned to the *Second Nun* in the "Canterbury Tales." Invocation partly a paraphrase from Dante. Story from "Legenda Aurea."

After return from first Italian mission, 1373.	Story of Griselde.	"Clerk's Tale." An English version of Petrarch's Latin version of a tale by Boccaccio.
Toward the close of the decade 1369–1379.	Story of Constaunce.	"Man of Law's Tale." From the Anglo-French Chronicle of Trivet.
Toward the close of 1369–1379.	Twelve "Tragedies" of Great Men and Women.	The first part of the "Monk's Tale," whose tragedies fall into two distinct groups.
Probably just after the return from the second Italian mission, 1379.	The Compleynt of Mars.	The story is founded on one told in Ovid's "Metamorphoses," with which Chaucer combines the popular astronomy of the day.
Difficult to date. Some authorities say shortly after 1373–1374; others, about 1380.	A Compleynt to his Lady.	A series of fragments in different metres,—partly written in Dante's *terza rima*.
Difficult to date. Probably about 1380.	Anelida and Arcyte. (Unfinished.)	About a fifth of the poem is based upon Boccaccio's "Teseide" and Statius's "Thebais."
About 1381.	Boece.	A prose translation of Boethius's "De Consolatione," one of the most popular books of the fourteenth century.
About 1381–1383.	Troilus and Criseyde.	By far the longest of Chaucer's single extant poems, the striking achievement of the middle period. Based upon Boccaccio's "Il Filostrato."
1382.	The Parlement of Foules.	Celebrates the winning and wooing of Anne of Bohemia by Richard II. Uses material taken from Cicero, from Boccaccio, and from Alain de l'Isle.
The "Troilus" period.	To Rosemounde.	A charming little ballade of three stanzas.
The "Troilus" period, perhaps as late as 1385.	Chaucer's Words unto Adam his Owne Scryvene.	A playful rating of his scribe for mistakes in copying "Boece" and "Troilus and Criseyde."
Perhaps begun some years before 1383, laid aside, and taken up when "Troilus and Criseyde" was finished, 1383–1384.	The Hous of Fame. (Unfinished.)	"With this poem we leave the period of the poet's finished work. From this time on his plans were far more ambitious . . . but the "Hous of Fame," the "Legende of Good Women," and greatest of all the "Canterbury Tales" were none of them completed."

1385.	The Legende of Good Women. (Unfinished.)	"The poem was intended to consist of a Prologue, the stories of nineteen women who have been true to love, and the legend of the crown of womanhood, Queen Alcestis." Only nine of the twenty legends were written. The sources were Ovid, Virgil, Boccaccio, and Guido delle Colonne.
About 1385 (when probably Chaucer himself went on pilgrimage to Canterbury), possibly as late as 1387. The writing of the great body of the "Tales," representing one-half of Chaucer's extant work, was probably included within the next six or seven years, though it is possible that he may have continued writing them up to the end of his life.	The plan of the "Canterbury Tales." The Prologue, the Talks by the Way, and a large proportion of the Tales.	"For about one-third of the 'Tales' no original, properly so called, is known to exist, but from the far East, or from France, Italy, or Germany, stories with similar plots have been unearthed which show that the idea was already in existence and only waited for Chaucer to develop it." Among known sources of definite "originals" are Boccaccio, Ovid, Livy, Jacobus de Voragine, Nicholas Trivet, Jean de Meung.
After 1382, and probably before 1390.	The Former Age. Fortune. (Called in the Mss. Balades de visage sans peinture.) Truth. Gentilesse. Lak of Stedfastnesse.	"A pleasant rhapsody upon the good old times." A triple ballade with a single envoy in praise of the friend of the "unpainted face" who is faithful in adversity. "Truth" and "Gentilesse" show Chaucer in his gravest mood. "Lak of Stedfastnesse" is chiefly notable for its envoy to Richard. The last five poems all show the influence of Boethius, and in several of them there are suggestions from the "Roman de la Rose."
1391.	Treatise on the Astrolabe.	Prose translation of the Latin version of a treatise by Messahala, an Arabian astronomer of the eighth century.

About 1393.	Envoy to Scogan.	A playful reproach to his friend Henry Scogan, with a serious request for help, which may have brought the pension of 1394.
Difficult to date. Probably about 1393.	Compleynt of Venus.	Three ballades, translations more or less free, from the famous Savoyard poet, Sir Otes de Granson.
1396.	Envoy to Bukton.	"This bitter-sweet ballade touches marriage, and is quite characteristic of the poet."
1399. (Perhaps earlier.)	Compleynt to his Purs.	"A sadly humorous poem, perhaps the last from the poet's pen."

THE PERIOD OF CHAUCER'S INFLUENCE, 1350–1500

CENTURY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY
1350	Higden: "Polychronicon," 1352, turned into English prose by John of Trevisa in 1387. "Voyage and Travels of Sir John Maundevile." "The Pearl": our first great English elegy. The poem is alliterative, but contains in addition an elaborate rhyming scheme. "Sir Gawaine and the Greene Knight": a romance. "Clannesse; Patience": two didactic poems. "Morte Arthur": an Arthurian romance. (These five poems are supposed to have been the work of the same author, an unknown poet possibly from the borders of Wales.) "Geste Historyal of the Destruction of Troy," 1360. Geoffrey Chaucer, 1340–1400. (See Chaucer Table.)	Gulielmo Pastrengo ("First Biographical Dictionary"), d. 1370. Hafiz, d. 1388. Persian poet. Pedro Lopez Ayala, 1332–1407. Spanish dramatist. Froissart, 1337–1410. "Chronicles." Jean Gerson, 1363–1429. Poggio, 1380–1459. Italian writer.	Statutes of Laborers, 1351. First Statute of Præmunire, 1353. Renewal of French war, 1354. Battle of Poitiers, 1356. Peace of Bretigny, 1360. Black Death, 1361. Law Pleadings in English, 1362. Statute of Kilkenny, 1367. Black Death, 1369.	Marino Faliero: Doge, fl. 1354–1355. The Jacquerie in France, 1358. Tyrants in Italy: Visconti, Milan. Scala, Verona. Este, Ferrara. Charles V, 1364–1380. The Schism, 1378–1439. Popes at Avignon, 1309–1377. Clock of Strasburg, 1378. Philip Van Artevelde, 1382.
1350	William Langland, 1332–1400. "The Vision of Piers Plowman." *A*. Text, 1362–63. *B*. Text, 1377. *C*. Text, ab. 1393.	Lobeira. "Amadis de Gaul," ab. 1390. Greek taught in Florence by Chrysoloras, ab. 1395.	The Good Parliament, 1376. Death of Black Prince, 1376. Richard II, 1377–1399.	Milan Cathedral begun, ab. 1387. Como Cathedral begun, 1396. Union of Calmar, 1397.

1350	"Richard the Redeless," prob. 1399. (This is a poem of counsel and rebuke to the unfortunate Richard II.) John Barbour, 1316 or 1330–1395. The first of the Scottish poets, if we omit Thomas of Erceldoune. His poem, "The Bruce," 1375, tells of the struggle for Scottish liberty which closed at Bannockburn. Temperate, but full of the national Scottish spirit. John Wyclif, 1324–1384. "Pamphlets." "Translation of the Bible," (completed) 1380. "Piers Plowman's Crede," imitated after Langland. John Gower, ab. 1325–1408. "Speculum Meditantis" (French). "Vox Clamantis" (Latin), a dream and a sermon, suggested by the uprising of the peasants in 1381. "Confessio Amantis" (English), 1393.	Enguerrand de Monstrelet, fl. 1400–1444, d. 1453.	The Peasants' Revolt (Wat Tyler's Insurrection), 1381. Condemnation of Wyclif at Blackfriars, 1382. Suppression of the Poor Preachers, 1382. Raid of Otterburne (Percy and Douglas), 1388. Statute of Præmunire, 1393. Deposition of Richard, 1399. Henry IV (Lancaster), 1399–1413. Revolt of Owen Glendower in Wales, 1400. Statute of Heresy, 1401.	"Imago Mundi," suggestion from Roger Bacon of finding the Indies by the west. University of St. Andrews, 1411.
1400	William of Nassington. "The Mirrour of Life"; a religious poem, written about 1400. Thomas Hoccleve, 1370–1450. "Gouvernail of Princes," his longest poem, ab. 1412. John Lydgate, 1370(?)–1451(?) "Troy Book," adapted from the Italian; ab. 1410. "Romance of Thebes"; copied from French Romances; in-	Charles d'Orleans, 1391–1465. Aurispa brings to Italy over 400 Greek Mss. ab. 1423. Thomas a Kempis, 1380–1471. "De Imitatione Christi," 1471.	Revolt of the Percies, 1403. Revolt of Archbishop Scrope, 1405. Prince James of Scotland captured, 1405. Henry V, 1413–1422. Lollard conspiracy, 1414.	Execution of John Huss, 1415. Hussite War, 1419–1436. Veronese, Ferrarese, Lombard, Neapolitan, Dutch, and French schools of painting established in the 15th century.

CENTURY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY
1400	troduced as an additional Canterbury tale; ab. 1420. "Falles of Princes"; free translation of Boccaccio, — "Falls of noted men and women." John Capgrave, 1393–1464. "Chronicle of England," to 1417. Andrew of Wyntoun. "Original Chronicle of Scotland," ab. 1420. (A rhyming chronicle.)		Battle of Agincourt, 1415. London streets paved, 1417. Sir John Oldcastle burned, 1418. Henry VI, 1422–1461. King's College, Cambridge. Magdalen College, Oxford.	Joan of Arc, fl. 1429–1431. Council of Basle, 1431–1449. University of Florence, 1438.
1425	James I of Scotland, 1395–1437. "The King's Quhair"; the story of his love. (He used Chaucer's seven-line stanza, which has ever since been called the Rime Royal.) "The Paston Letters," 1422–1509. The letters of an English country family; important as reflecting the manners, customs, and literary tastes of the time. John Harding, 1378–1468. A soldier of Agincourt, and the writer of a metrical chronicle.		Siege of Orleans, 1428–1429. County suffrage restricted, 1430.	
	"Thornton Romances" (copied ab. 1440). Reginald Pecock, 1390(?)–1461. "Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy," 1449. He wrote against the Lollards and defended the doctrines of the Church, but foreshadowed	Culture in Aragon and the Sicilies. François Villon, 1431–1460, or soon after. Gutenberg prints the "Mazarin Bible," 1453.	Congress of Arras, 1435. Douglas Wars, 1443–1452. Jack Cade's Insurrection, 1450. Civil Wars of the Roses, 1455–1486.	Invention of Printing (L. Costar and J. Gutenberg), 1438–1445. Pragmatic Sanction, 1439. Lucca della Robbia pottery.

1425	Puritanism. His books were disapproved of by his own party, who burnt them because he claimed that the Bible was the only rule of faith. Dame Juliana Berners. "Treatise of Hawking, Hunting, and Fishing with an Angle." "Treatise of Arms." Sir John Fortescue. "Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy." An example of the prose of English politics. Thomas Chestre. "Lay of Sir Launfal" (romance from the French).		Edward IV (York), 1461–1483.	Fra Angelico (p), 1387–1455. Donatello (sc), 1386–1466. University of Barcelona, 1430. University of Glasgow, 1451.
1450	"Blind Harry." "William Wallace," ab. 1469. A long and passionate patriotic poem in the heroic couplet. "Ballads." Although sung by the people from early days, the ballads were not published till the latter half of the 15th century. The "Battle of Otterburne," and "Chevy Chase" appeared between 1450 and 1500; the "Lytel Geste of Robin Hood," the "Nut Brown Mayde," and others appeared at the end of the 15th, or beginning of the 16th, century.	Pico della Mirandola, 1463–1494.	Warwick, King-maker, fl. 1461–1471.	Constantinople taken, 1453. Louis XI, 1461–1483. St. Peter's, Rome, begun 1450. First stone laid by Pope Julius I, 1506. Fra Filippo Lippi (p), 1406–1469.
1475	Robert Henryson, d. ab. 1500. One of the Scotch imitators of Chaucer. But all his work is not imitative; a Dunfermline schoolmaster.		Battle of Tewkesbury, 1471.	

THE PERIOD OF CHAUCER'S INFLUENCE, 1350–1500 — *Continued*

CENTURY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY
1475	"The Testament of Cressid" (a continuation of Chaucer's Troilus and Cressida). The Moral Fables of Æsop" long stories, containing political allusions, as well as descriptions of Scottish scenery. "Robin and Makyn"; a short pastoral poem. John Skelton, ab. 1460–1529. At first an imitator of the old poetry, afterward a fierce satirist. Although a scholar, he could also write in short "rude rayling rhymes, pleasing only to the popular ear"; and his love lyrics foreshadow those of the Elizabethan age. "On the Death of Edward IV," 1483. "An Elegy on the Death of the Duke of Northumberland," 1489. "A Goodly Garland of Laurel," 1523. "The Bowge of Court." "Colin Clout." "The Boke of Phyllip Sparowe" imitates Catullus and tells of the grief of a nun, Jane Scrope, for the death of her bird; the style is gay.	Lorenzo de' Medici, fl. 1470–1492. Philippe de Comines, 1445–1511. Pulci. "Morgante Maggiore," 1481. Master singers. Ficino, 1433–1499. "Theologia Platonica," 1482. Boiardo, 1434–1494. "Orlando Innamorata," 1495. B. Rucellai, 1449–1514. Politian, 1454–1494. Sanazzaro, 1458–1530. "Arcadia," 1504. Sebastian Brandt. "Narrenschiff," 1494.	Edward V (murdered), 1483. Richard III, 1483–1485. Battle of Bosworth Field, 1485. Henry VII (Tudor), 1485–1509. Treaty with Ferdinand and Isabella, 1489. Perkin Warbeck captured, 1497. St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Henry VIIth's Chapel, Westminster.	Ferdinand and Isabella, fl. 1479–1512. University of Upsala, 1476. First watches? Provence joined to France, 1483. Swiss Confederacy independent, 1499. Perugino (p), 1446–1523. Leonardo da Vinci (p), 1452–1519. Decline of Gothic architecture. Sandro Botticelli (p), 1447–1510. Savonarola, 1452–1498.
1500	Stephen Hawes, 1483(?)–1513(?) An imitator of the old poetry. "The Temple of Glass," 1500(?)			

"The Conversion of Swearers," 1509. "The Pastime of Pleasure," 1517, written ab. 1506. (The allegory of the education of a knight; it drew its inspiration from the "Romance of the Rose.") Gavin Douglas, 1474–1522. One of the Scotch imitators of Chaucer. "Palace of Honor," written ab. 1501. Trans. of "Virgil's Æneid," written ab. 1513. To each book he wrote a prologue of his own; three are descriptions of Scottish country in May, autumn, and winter. William Dunbar, 1460(?)-1530(?) The greatest of the Scotch imitators of Chaucer. His satires and satirical ballads remind us in their coarseness and fun of Burns. "The Thistle and the Rose," 1503. "The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins," 1507. "Lament for the Makars," 1507. "The Golden Targe," 1508.	The Stephens' Press in Paris, ab. 1490–1590. Chamber of the Eglantine in Holland, 1496. Von Alkmar. "Reinecke Fuchs," 1498.		

1. Henceforth we are in the England of English-speaking people. The reign of Edward III is noted for the siege of Calais and the battles of Crécy and Poitiers, as well as for improvement in the home government.

This is the period of the three great pestilences called the Black Death, and of the insurrection under Wat Tyler.

2. Henceforth dates affixed to books indicate the year of publication, unless there is explanation to the contrary.

3. Remember the Invention of Printing and the Fall of Constantinople. These two facts are most important in marking the approach of the Renaissance.

4. It is important to observe the rise of the Scotch poets, with their love of nature, their humor, and their power of satire.

While the Scotch poets sang, the War of the Roses was raging.

5. The Renaissance in art and literature has already begun in Italy; this is the period of Lorenzo de' Medici and Savonarola, of Fra Angelico and Sanazzaro.

CHAPTER V

THE CONTEMPORARIES OF CHAUCER

I. Lesser Writers of the Fourteenth Century

THERE were other noteworthy people writing in England during that late flowering season of the middle ages, the last half of the fourteenth century, though there were no others so great as Langland and Chaucer. It is well worth while to look back now and then, as we pursue our long journey over the road that we have travelled, and to get proportions at a glance. If we do this now, our imagination reviews a long stretch of almost barren centuries, beginning before the Normans came to England; then suddenly it comes into this little region of blossom, these fifty years when men were mysteriously impelled to speech and song. We wonder if the people who lived then realized what was happening.

Sir John Mandeville, 14th century.

Prose usually develops more slowly than poetry, and little prose interesting for its art values was produced in this period; but there is at this time one prose book in our language which we must certainly not pass over. This is "The Voyages and Travels," purporting to have been enjoyed and recorded by one Sir John Mandeville, Knight. There never was any Sir John Mandeville. After centuries, during which the public has taken him seriously, we must now reluctantly send that worthy knight into the world of

shades, to keep company with Crusoe and Gulliver. But although he has vanished, to our great loss, the book remains, to our great profit: and though it was first written in French, the English version is so racy in style as well as so delightful in matter that it has real importance. It began in English the literature of imagined adventures which has always been popular; and Defoe himself cannot tell us with a graver air of conviction the extraordinary doings of Crusoe than the author of Mandeville shows, in describing the people whose one foot is so great that it serves as a parasol, and the country where there are many serpents because of the heat and the abundance of pepper, and the lake of tears wept by Adam and Eve when driven out of Paradise, and the pearls at the bottom thereof. Here and there, mingled with legend and invention, are curious echoes of fact, doubtless traditional from some real traveller. The book shows better than anything else that has come down to us how people thought of the world they lived in, more than a century before the sailing of Columbus.

Revival of alliterative verse.

We find nothing else of importance in prose. But in verse, the fourteenth century produced one development full of interest. A little before Chaucer wrote, certain poets made an attempt to recall poetry from French levity to Anglo-Saxon soberness and substance, and revived for the time the old alliterative line. Apart from Langland, of whom we shall talk presently, the most important poems of this kind that have come down to us may have been the work of one man; if so, he was a man of genius so penetrating and tender as to rank almost with Chaucer and

"Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight," about 1360.

Langland. "Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight," an Arthurian romance, two didactic poems, "Cleanness" and "Patience"; and finally the first religious elegy in English, an exquisite poem which we call "The Pearl," are the works ascribed to him. They are written in the West-Midland dialect, are harder to read than Chaucer or even Langland, and are probably somewhat earlier; but they have grace and charm, and they reveal a temperament as individual and lovable as Cynewulf's or Wordsworth's. "Sir Gawayne" is a fine story, finely told. "The Pearl" tells how the author mourned the death of his little daughter, and how a vision of her came to bless him. The poem has a reality, both in the religious and in the human feeling, which few mediæval visions possess. It is indeed a pearl, a beautiful thing born out of sorrow. There was joy among lovers of poetry when this poem was recently discovered; and Tennyson bade it welcome in four charming lines.

"The Pearl," about 1360.

John Gower, about 1330–1408.

During all the Chaucerian period, there lived and wrote copiously one John Gower. There is everything in Gower that there is in Chaucer, — except genius. His poem, like the "Canterbury Tales," is a collection of stories; these stories reflect the tastes and interests and sentiments of the middle ages, just as Chaucer's stories do. They are just as good stories; in one or two cases they are the same, only they are told, as a general rule, without wit or charm, or poetic feeling or melody. We realize, as with a sense of relief we put Gower's poetry aside, that he has taught us one thing: genius may and does owe a great deal to inheritance and environment; its mode of working and the material

which it handles, much even in its spirit, may be derived from its age; yet in its essence it is no product of present or past, but a heaven-sent mystery.

It is only fair to the moral Gower, as Chaucer called him, to say that the "Confessio Amantis" was the work of his old age. He was perhaps older than Chaucer by ten years, but his long poem was not written till 1393, long after the "Canterbury Tales" had been started. Gower had written two other long poems before this: the "Vox Clamantis" in Latin, and the "Speculum Meditantis" in French. Possibly he did not have sense or spirit to trust himself to the new, rude, uncourtly tongue till Chaucer showed him the way. He is the last English author of importance, however, to compose in French; and from now on we can, with one or two exceptions, ignore books by English authors written in any language but their own.

II. Langland and the Social Revolt

It is strange to think how many things are always going on at once in the world, and how differently life may look at the same time to different people. Chaucer saw an England in good spirits, an England of holiday mood, full of romance and color; and that England really existed. But another England existed by its side, throbbing with discontent and with sorrow; and this second England also had its poet. He was a man of a great soul, this poet. He wrote only one long poem, but it was worthy to be the work of a lifetime, and he rewrote it with utmost care three times. He called it, "The Vision of Will-

iam Concerning Piers the Ploughman"; his own name we suppose, though we cannot be quite certain, to have been William Langland.

William Langland, about 1332 to about 1400.

Langland was not so great a genius as Chaucer, and people do not remember him so well to-day. He was of a brooding and melancholy temperament, and he had no sense of fun. He threw in his lot with the poor, and did not have much to do with the gay new French fashions in literature. He chose for his verse the old alliterative swinging line, which recalls to us the cadence of Cynewulf. It is hard for us to catch music in this form of poetry or to understand how it pleased people's ears; but its revival shows what a hold it had on the love of Englishmen. To-day, we cannot read most of Langland for verse-beauty. He is dull indeed who does not read Chaucer with pleasure; but one has to love the middle ages and be much in earnest about living, to enjoy Langland. Nevertheless, if any reader has patience to linger with him and puzzle out his meaning, his sad spirit comes and dwells beside that reader, and becomes a brother beloved.

We said at the beginning of the first chapter of this part that the most representative and important literature of the middle ages was inspired by one of the two great forces, — Catholicism and Chivalry. But we said also that far in the distance could be discerned another figure beside that of Knight and Monk, the figure of the Laborer, and that his time for speech would come. It has come now; and the poet of the Laborer is William Langland.

We do not know nearly as much about Langland's personality as we do about Chaucer's. He was not

attached to the court, a gentleman of importance, whose name is found on public records; he was a poor, lank, obscure man, — Long Will, they called him. He used to wander over the Malvern Hills sometimes, where the air is high and pure, and fall a-dreaming there; but for the most part he lived in London, with his wife Kitty and his daughter Kalote. We must not think of London in the fourteenth century as if it were the portentous smoky city of our own day: we must, —

"Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,
And dream of London small and white and clean,
The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green,

* * * * * *

While near the thronged wharf Geoffrey Chaucer's pen
Moves over bills of lading." [1]

But, quiet as the place would seem to us, it was already the centre of England. It witnessed already fierce pitiful contrasts between poverty and wealth. Here Langland, who was a tonsured clerk apparently in minor orders in the Church, used to pick up his living by singing dirges for the repose of souls. Here, if we may trust his own story, he even at times had to beg his dinner, so poor was he. But he did not try to ingratiate himself with the rich; perhaps he was not very polite to them. He says that he was loath to reverence lords or ladies when he met them on the street, or to say "God save you" to sergeants dressed in fur with pendants of silver; and that,

[1] William Morris: Prologue to the "Earthly Paradise."

because of these glum manners of his, people often took him for a fool. We can see him slipping through the gay thoroughfares, his gaunt figure slightly bent, a frown upon his brow. He was a very different person from the pleasant, sunny Chaucer. He was a social malcontent; there have been plenty of others since his day. And Langland, like many of the same class, had a tender heart of his own when it was rightly appealed to.

Social England.

He had some reason for the mixture of sorrow and perplexity with which he looked out on the world. For the England which he saw with those honest eyes of his was not Merrie England; it was a land devastated by war and pestilence. The last part of the fourteenth century was a time of great distress for the laboring classes in England. The long Hundred Years' War with France was going on all this time, and the court and the gentry were absorbed in turn by a festive, brilliantly ordered life at home, and by the great foreign campaigns. But the common people had other things to think of. It was they who fell in greatest numbers on the battlefield; it was they who were swept off the face of the earth in yet greater numbers by the horrible scourge of the Black Death. And then, when they were just recovering themselves, would come severe laws, and taxes which seemed to them most cruel and unjust. The burden of such laws pressed heaviest upon the agricultural laborers in the country, for the workers in the towns were partially protected by the strong mediæval trade guilds. It was a dreary life for the most part, that of the workers in the fields. They toiled hard, they knew cold and hunger. "Alas," says Langland,

Condition of the laboring classes.

with an outburst of indignant pity, "alas for the poor folk in cots, charged with children and chief lords' rents! What they may spare from their spinning, they spend in house-hire, and in milk and meal to make messes of porridge to satisfy their children who are greedy for food. And they themselves also suffer much hunger, and woe in the winter-time with waking o' nights to rock the cradle. They card and comb and patch and wash, they rub and peel rushes, so that it is ruth to read or to show in rhyme the woe of these women who dwell in cots." And in many another passage he gives us pictures equally sad and equally convincing.

Spirit of revolt, religious and social

It was no wonder that during the fourteenth century the spirit of revolt was abroad. This spirit took two directions; it was social, it was religious. Anger against the Church which preached poverty and practised luxury, anger against the privileged classes: these two impassioned impulses found ominous expression before the century closed. The religious rebellion expressed itself in the Lollard movement inaugurated by Wyclif; the social, in the Peasant Revolt, which took place in 1381, some years after Langland had given to the world the second version of his poem. These matters belong to history and are best studied there; but the life of the nation and its literature are bound together, and it is in the prose of Wyclif and the poetry of Langland that we can best catch the spirit which drove men to these movements of protest.

There is a beautiful book by a man who has carried on in our own day the literature of social revolt which Langland began in the fourteenth century:

William Morris. It is called "The Dream of John Ball," and it tells with much vividness part of the story of the great uprising of the peasants. The spirit of that uprising was well expressed in the rough couplet which at this time began to run about from mouth to mouth: —

"When Adam delvèd and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?"

The Peasant Revolt, 1381.

queried the couplet. It was the spirit of democracy which spoke, over four hundred years before democracy was consciously realized by the Christian world. There is no doubt that Langland's poem was one of the powerful instruments in stirring up this new spirit; his Piers (or Peter) the Ploughman became a symbolical figure, the typical hero of the laboring man.

And yet Langland himself was not a revolutionist. He was a thinker and dreamer. His great Visions are full of wistful passion, of spiritual insight. They wander far and wide, surveying the manifold woes and puzzles of life; but always they come back to one central thought, and it is a true and beautiful one: —

"For there that Love is leader, ne lackèd never grace."

The allegory of the Ploughman.

Langland's heart went out most earnestly to the vision or allegory from which he named his whole poem: the Story of the Ploughman. It is a strange story, different from anything else which we meet in the middle ages; a sort of "Pilgrim's Progress" of the fourteenth century. We can compare it point by point with Bunyan's immortal dream; only,

we shall find one great difference, — that while Bunyan's hero is occupied with saving his own soul, Langland's is occupied with leading toward salvation the whole of society.

Langland has his pilgrimage as well as Chaucer, and it is interesting to put the two together. Langland opens his eyes when his vision begins on a field full of folk. There are more than there were at the Tabard on that memorable April morning. There are ploughmen who played full seldom; hermits and jugglers and merchants; beggars enough and pilgrims and friars, and bakers and brewers, and butchers and masons and miners, and cooks going about crying: "Hot pies, hot! Good pigs and geese: go dine, go dine!" All the middle ages are there. And there is one named Repentance, preaching to them all a heart-searching sermon. So well does he preach that they are converted, every one; yes, even the Seven Deadly Sins, whom Langland describes so vividly that we see them as clearly as we do Chaucer's Wife of Bath. The whole assembly falls on its knees and takes a vow, as most people did then when smitten in conscience; they will go on pilgrimage.

But it is a strange pilgrimage that they undertake! A pilgrimage to Truth. Reason recommends it to them: —

> "Ye that seek Saint James and saints of Rome
> Seek Saint Truth, for he may save you all."

"I will seek Truth first ere I see Rome," says one of the penitents. So off they all start, and in such a hurry that the Pardoner, a personage whom Lang-

land evidently despises as much as Chaucer, is left behind.

What a company it is! Very different from Chaucer's pilgrims, ambling along good roads on their comfortable horses, chatting and laughing in the April sunlight. They are dead in earnest, Langland's people. They "bluster forth as beasts over banks and hills, till late it was and long," for there was no wight so wise as to know the way to Truth, and there appeared to be no travelled road leading to his shrine. Nor could they find any wayfarer to give them direction. Even a very wise and travelled pilgrim whom they meet, whose hat is plastered all over with holy images, treats them with great scorn when they ask him the way to St. Truth. He never heard of anybody who wanted to go to that shrine before, he says.

So the pilgrims are terribly discouraged, and stop in pure bewilderment. Then all of a sudden some one pipes up, and they look around and see that it is a very common, vigorous-looking man, — Peter the Ploughman. "Why, do you want to learn the way to Truth?" says Peter. "Well, I can tell you. I am an intimate friend of Truth's. I have been his servant these fifty winters. I dig and I delve, I sow and I thresh, I understand tinker's craft and tailor's craft, I can do all Truth tells me to. He is the promptest payer poor men know. I can tell you the way to get to him."

The pilgrims are delighted and want to pay him for his instructions. But Piers will not take a farthing. Truth would love him the less a long time thereafter, he says, if he did. And he tells them

exactly how to go. But alas! It is a very complicated journey. They are all sure that they cannot find the way alone, and they beg Piers to serve as guide. But this, he says, he cannot do, because he hasn't ploughed his half-acre; Truth would not like him to leave his work undone; besides, if he did, people would starve. He has a great deal of honest common sense, has Piers.

It is a perplexing situation, but the pilgrims find a way out. They all exclaim, — it is a fine lady to whom the thought seems first to come, and a knight seconds her, — that they will turn to and help Piers do his work quickly, and then he will be free and they can set off together. This pleases Piers very much. He receives authority over all the pilgrims, and sets them to work, giving them the sort of things to do for which they are best fitted. This part of Langland's poem is profoundly original. No one before him had thought of the working-man, — for Piers, as is seen from his manifold occupations, is more than merely a ploughman, — as possible leader of the industrial community, exalted over knights and professional men and the Church itself.

Piers makes a very good governor, though he has a great deal of difficulty with some lazy people who won't work, but want to sit on the fence all day with their legs hanging and sing "How! trolli lolli!" He has to call in Hunger to help him before he can settle them. As a rule, however, the pilgrims seem to enjoy their work very much. We do not hear any more about the pilgrimage. Probably when they all get profitably busy in carrying on with honest intent the

necessary labor of the world, they find that the shrine of Truth is not in a very far country. Indeed, Piers himself has promised them that the end of their quest will be that each will find truth sitting in his heart in a chain of charity, as if he were a child.

But the story of the Ploughman does not stop there. Langland sees in his vision that God the Father sends Piers a bull of pardon, by which he becomes the spiritual, as he is already the economic, head of the community. Presently a priest comes along, who objects to this, wants to see the Bull which forms Piers' credentials. And behold! it is no formal pardon at all, but only a promise that, if men will do well, God will save their souls. The priest is not at all satisfied with this, and he begins to reason and to quarrel noisily, and the Dreamer wakes.

Since, however, the pardon has been promised to those who "do well," it is very important to find out just what doing well involves; and so Langland falls asleep again, and dreams many visions bearing on this point. It takes him a great while to reach his end, and he passes almost every phase of life in musing review: but he learns to understand at last the three stages of the perfect life. To Do Well is to do what law teaches; to be true of one's tongue, and earn one's livelihood by the labor of one's hands; to be trusty, and to grieve no man. Beyond this is another ideal, which to practise is to Do Better, and this is, to love both friend and foe, to be humble and courteous, to lend readily, and to resist not evil. Beyond this is the highest ideal of all, and that is to Do Best. Only in the Life of the Ascended

Christ and of His Church does Langland find a full example of this great thought. Do Best is no longer passive; to Do Best is to go forth into the world, to heal and to redeem; to cast down the wicked, to have authority in judgment.

Those cantos of the poem which give a poetic study of the Passion of Christ, are the most beautiful and impassioned that Langland ever wrote. One in particular is a very great poem: it is the eighteenth canto in the B text, which describes with wonderful fervor a scene on which the middle ages loved to dwell: Christ's Harrowing of Hell, or his descent into Hades on the evening of Good Friday, and his release of the spirits of the just held in prison there. These cantos reintroduce, in a most interesting way, the figure of the Ploughman. He is no longer merely the honest laborer, the only person who knows the Secrets of Truth in a bewildered generation: nor is he merely the industrial head of the community, startling as may seem to us this exaltation of the working-man. His figure becomes surrounded with a mystic radiance; the poet speaks of him, not with the hearty fellowship of earlier cantos, but with reverence, almost with awe. Peter the Ploughman is manifest to us as the representative on earth of Christ Himself: and we see him coming in with a cross before the common people, with the marks of the Passion upon him: Christ the Conqueror, Christ arisen.

So begins the literature of social revolt in England, rooted deep in the heart of Christianity. Through many and devious phases has it passed since then; many more, perhaps, await it. But still

Langland's earnest spirit of love toward God and man, of reverence for poverty and faithful toil, holds for many seekers a golden key to some of our gravest problems.

III. Wyclif and the Religious Revolt

The religious and the social awakening went on together; indeed, the spirit of religious revolt was the first abroad in the land. It was no wonder that this spirit arose; for the Church, once the protector of the poor and the witness to unworldliness, had allowed abuses and corruptions unnumbered to defile her purity. In particular, the venal and degraded lives of many of the begging friars, Franciscans and Dominicans, were a hideous travesty upon the ideals of St. Dominic and St. Francis. Charity once walked the earth, to be sure, in a friar's robe, says Langland, but that was long ago in St. Francis's time. What his order had become we may best learn by the scathing studies in Chaucer of the Friar and the Pardoner. Langland's invective is equally scornful, more indignant. Against such degradation of the Gospel the native Anglo-Saxon integrity and honesty arose in vehement protest. That strain of simple Christianity, which as we saw was strong in the British isles before the work of Augustine and Wilfrid emphasized and established Italian and papal dominion there, reasserted itself after many centuries. The man through whom it spoke was Wyclif, a sturdy Saxon, if one ever breathed.

It is not for a history of literature to trace the early phases of the Reformation in England. We

consider Wyclif here, as the father of English prose. He is like many other authors whom we shall meet, whose greatness is chiefly in the world of action and thought, who hold only a secondary importance from the point of view of art, yet even on that ground cannot be wholly ignored. Wyclif was a great thinker, doctor of divinity, and master of an Oxford college. He was the last of the mediæval schoolmen. And he was honored and famous long before the impulse of reform seized him. He wrote Latin treatises at this time in his career; but it was not long before he awoke to the keen recognition of the needs of the common people, and, turning to them, began to address them in homilies, sermons, tracts, in their own tongue. Very likely the remarkable influence of Langland's poem, in its early version, suggested to him that he should write in English. He trained up followers to do likewise; his "poor priests" tramped the country, preaching after a new fashion the simplest gospel truths; appealing, not to imagination, as the Catholic literature of the middle ages had largely done, but exclusively to reason and conscience. Much of this Wyclifite literature has come down to us. It has little grace or harmony of style; on the other hand, it is written in a prose that goes straight to the mark, nervous, crisp, telling, and clear. We feel the genius of Wyclif in it all; but we feel that genius yet more in another work of his, for which the English-speaking race owes him undying gratitude. For it was Wyclif who first had the Bible translated into English, doing much of the work himself, and who thereby put into the hands of the nation the book

John Wyclif, about 1324–1384.

which, apart from its higher influences, did more than any other one thing to create for centuries our prose style. When we think that the laity had up to this time derived their knowledge of the Bible from pictures, images, Church ceremonies, and miracle plays, we can see how marvellous was the gift which Wyclif gave them in the simple gospel.

The language of Wyclif's translation is strange to us to-day. He translated from the Vulgate, or Latin version of St. Jerome, and his work is not the foundation of our Authorized Version. That came later. Meanwhile, these early, stammering, awkward versions of what we know so well have a touching charm and a grave interest. Here is Wyclif's version of the Beatitudes: —

"Blessid be pore men in spirit: for the kyngdom of hevene is herun. Blessid ben mylde men: for thei schulen weelde the erthe. Blessid ben thei that mournen: for they schal be coumfortid. Blessid be thei that hungren and thirsten rigtwisnesse: for thei schal be fulfillid. Blessid ben merciful men: for thei schal gete mercy. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte: for thei schulen se God. Blessid ben pesible men: for thei schulen be clepid goddis children. Blessid ben thei that suffren persecucioun for rightwisnesse: for the kyngdom of hevene is hern."

REFERENCE BOOKS

Cassell publishes a cheap edition of Mandeville, with modernized spelling. Gollancz has a charming edition, with translation, of the "Pearl." "Sir Gawaine and the Greene Knight," translated by Jessie Weston, is in a dainty volume published by David Nutt. Gower's Confessio Amantis is most accessible in the Carisbrooke Library, edited by Henry Morley.

SKEAT's edition of Langland, 2 vols. Also, first seven passus, Clarendon Press. Translation, of same, KATE WARREN.

J. JUSSERAND, Piers Plowman, A Contribution to the History of English Mysticism. V. D. SCUDDER, Social Ideals in English Letters, Part I, Ch. I. ELIZABETH DERING HANSCOM, The Argument of the Vision of Piers Plowman, Modern Language Association, Vol. IX.

GREEN, History of the English People, Chap. VI, Sec. IV. TRAILL, Social England, Vol. II. JESSOP, The Coming of the Friars. CUTTS, Scenes and Characters of the Middle Ages; Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages in England. WILLIAM MORRIS, The Dream of John Ball.

BOSWORTH and WARING, Translations of the Gospels, includes Wyclif's. English Works of Wyclif, ed. by T. ARNOLD. By J. D. MATTHEW-PENNINGTON, J. Wyclif, his Life, Time, and Teaching. BUDDENSIEG, John Wiclif, Patriot and Reformer. G. V. LECHLER, John Wyclif, and his English Precursors.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

It is not only entertaining, but profitable, to have stories told from Mandeville in class, for various inferences can be drawn concerning the state of knowledge in the middle ages, and concerning mediæval habits of thought. Ruskin alludes to Mandeville in a charming way in the "Ethics of the Dust." Gollancz's edition of the "Pearl" is a pleasure to handle, and portions of the poem should be read. The teacher might here lecture on the Elegy as an art-form, or suggest comparisons with other great elegies. Any one would enjoy owning and reading Jessie Weston's pretty edition of "Sir Gawaine." Gower may be taken by the young on trust.

Young students can read Langland only in short extracts or in translation. Enough work, however, to give an idea of his flavor, his racy vocabulary, his quaint use of symbolism and figure, his pathos and moral earnestness, may well be done.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

This is a point where interesting lectures may profitably be given. The social conditions of England may be pictured. Langland may be compared in his social teaching with Words-

worth, with Carlyle, with Ruskin, with Tolstoï. His pictures of contemporary life may be made vivid to the class, and his symbolic impersonations, like his figures of the seven deadly sins, may be compared with others of the same general type, as Spenser's in the first book of the "Faerie Queene," Giotto's in the Arena chapel at Padua. A lecture on St. Francis would not be out of place, and would be helpful in understanding the influence of Wyclif. A lecture on Wyclif is needed to expand the slight treatment of the text, and the teacher might spend an hour in reading to the class from Wyclif's Bible, while the students compared his rendering with the Authorized Version.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEDIÆVAL DRAMA

THE middle ages had its epics, its lyrics, its prose; it had also its drama. No other drama ever held the public so long. For nearly five centuries it was in its rude way a living force; only three centuries separate us from Shakespeare.

The mediæval drama is not, in the strict sense, literature; for it was never meant to be read, and we must not turn to it for literary values. Nevertheless, it is of great importance, for it prepared the way for Shakespeare. It trained the dramatic instincts of the people from whom was to spring the Elizabethan drama, and the Elizabethan drama is the greatest imaginative self-expression of the modern world.

Biblical inspiration.

No drama was ever so audacious in subject as this; for it began with the creation of the world, and only paused with the day of judgment. All heaven and all hell it brought upon the scene: angels and devils; the Lord of Life Himself, and the lord of sin. Between these two mighty opposing forces it placed the greatest of all protagonists,—Man. Mediæval drama was part of mediæval religion. There are, to be sure, traces of secular drama in the middle ages, but they are comparatively insignificant; and, though in Europe many plays were founded on the lives of saints, we are not sur-

prised to find that the drama of the race which had produced Cædmon and Cynewulf was almost wholly Biblical.

Development. The dramatization of the great story was indeed sure to come among people who persistently visualized all the mysteries of faith. It grew, this religious drama, in a way that seems strange to us moderns. There were no theatres in the middle ages. The earliest theatre was a church, and not only a church, but the stage or scene was the holy place around the high altar. Here, on the great feast days, white-robed choristers representing the Christmas shepherds or the Easter angels detached themselves from the rest of the choir or clergy, and, with special chants, with gestures, later with more pronounced action, made visible to worshippers who could understand religion best through their eyes, the central facts of the Gospel story. In time this nascent drama moved from choir to nave, became more and more separate from the religious service, and gained new, independent subjects. A great step was taken when it left the church and passed into the open air of the square outside; a greater, perhaps, when it definitely abandoned Latin, and talked in the tongue understood of the people. In time, secular actors took the place of the clergy; and finally, the drama, fully developed, took to wandering at will through the town, the fullest expression we have of the rude, childish, generous heart of the mediæval people.

Character. For the people created, possessed, acted, this mammoth, anonymous drama. Different scenes in the

story were undertaken by the different trade guilds. A car, or travelling stage, was devoted to each act, and prided itself on its full equipment in properties and actors. The car was built in tiers, of which the lower was curtained off to serve as green-room, while the action took place upon the upper stage. Whatever the arrangement, a great feature of the mediæval stage was a monstrous pair of jaws, sometimes worked to open and shut, which represented that spot so real to the mediæval fancy, — the jaws of hell, ever yawning to receive unhappy mortals. On festival days, especially the Feast of Corpus Christi in midsummer, these lumbering cars would roll one after another through the thronged holiday streets, and at each pause would be enacted the pageant of the guild. All through a summer's day, through several days sometimes, these pageants would pass by, and the familiar streets would be to the populace no longer the scene of petty everyday life, but of the Drama of Redemption.

Nothing daunted the audacity of the mediæval playwrights. The Deity Himself they put upon the stage, with primitive simplicity which appears strange to our modern mind. "Paid for a pair of gloves for God, twopence," is an item in an old account of the theatre. The first act of the drama was the Fall of Lucifer. The arch-fiend and his attendant angels tumbled literally from the upper stage into hell-mouth, whence they emerged, sprightly if hideous demons. Then came the pageant of the Creation of Man, followed by successive scenes from the Scrip-

ture story: Cain and Abel, the Flood, the Sacrifice of Isaac, the long row of Prophets foretelling the birth of the Saviour. More intense and eager would grow the feelings of the audience as the pageants of the New Testament drew near. How tenderly they would follow the rude grace and touching childishness with which were depicted all the exquisite stories of the birth and infancy of the Lord! With what awed and aching hearts would they watch the pageants which set forth with unsparing, piteous detail the scenes of His Passion and Death! Then came the Harrowing of Hell, full of dramatic action between the wrathful devils, routed in the moment of their triumph, and the Christ, victorious through His very agony. The Resurrection and Ascension thrilled watchful hearts with adoring joy; and from Whitsunday the drama advanced rapidly to the Day of Judgment, where not all the primitive setting could lessen the awe with which simple souls heard pronounced the words of doom and mercy; and saw the souls of the blessed in their little white coats rising into heavenly glory, and of the others, dark with agony, seized and dragged into the fiery mouth of hell by gibbering, horny devils.

Values. As far as poetic values go, this old drama is rude in the extreme. The verse is usually mere doggerel; there is little idea of dramatic movement or arrangement. Yet it has a certain power and pathos, derived, if from nothing else, from the majesty of the theme. It is very touching, too, to see how the old playwrights conceived of the Holy Story as if it had happened in Lancashire or London. They do not hesitate to introduce into the sacred tale the rough

manners, the characters, the humor, which they knew in daily life. In the Old Testament plays, the pageant of the Flood was particularly devoted to this kind of humor, and Noah's Wife, a character "ben trovata," was own cousin to Chaucer's Wife of Bath. She wouldn't go into the ark. She didn't believe it was going to rain. She was angry because Noah had not told her what he was doing in all the hundred years he had been building that boat. The "Merry Wives of Windsor," we may surmise, come from her tribe. There is less broad farce, but equal humor, in the charming, absurd, Nativity Plays. Here honest English rustics, who like Ely's ale, and bear such names as Tudde, Hancken, and Trowle, indulge in jokes, quarrels, horse-play; grumble at the weather, —"Whew! Golly! How cold it is!" exclaims one; are not at all awed by the Gloria-angel, whom they fall to mimicking; but do lay aside their roughness, filled with tender adoration, at the sight of the Holy Child. Very touching in realism are the gifts these shepherds bring him: a brooch with a tin bell, for instance; two cobble nuts on a ribbon; a horn spoon that will hold forty pease; and the like. In one set of plays, little shepherd boys follow their masters, and give, they too, of their substance.

> "To pull down apples, pears, and plums,
> Old Joseph shall not need to hurt his thumbs:
> I give thee here my nut-hook,"

says one little lad. There is much real beauty, also, about the other scenes in the Nativity Pageants, notably those where speaks the Mother-Maid, gazing

in brooding worship, blended with gentle mother love, upon her mysterious Child: —

> "Son, as I am simple subject of thine,
> Vouchsafe, sweet son, I pray thee,
> That I may take thee in these arms of mine,
> And in this poor weed to array thee.
> Grant me this bliss,
> As I am thy mother chosen to be
> In soothfastness."

That Joseph swears by the Trinity and Herod by Mahomet does not seem, however absurd the anachronism, to alter the essential truth of human feeling in the naïve old dramas.

When the dramas draw near to the more solemn or tragic portions of the story, however, their failure is more obvious; and, despite an occasional touch of beauty, the puerility and feebleness become so great that sympathy almost ceases. But we must look, not at execution, but at conception, if we would realize the power of this drama in the poetic education of the English race. And the conception has a titanic grandeur which assuredly prepared the way for the greater art of the future. "Elizabethan tragedy, with the careless strength of a young giant, rejected the troublesome conventions of the stage, — unity of time, unity of place. Was not England reared upon dramas that embraced heaven, earth, and hell within their limits, that encompassed all of time that had been and yet should be?"[1] Not only in breadth of scope, but in rough truth to human life, in a frank realism that alternated with conventional

[1] Katharine Lee Bates.

types, in the blending of tragedy and comedy, the mediæval stage prepared the way for Shakespeare. Moreover, these old plays developed an insatiable desire for dramatic representation. "They made England a nation of actors, a nation of theatre-lovers, a nation of deep dramatic cravings, who would be content with no such learned and elegant trifling as amused the court and university, but cried out for range, for earnestness, for life. To follow the history of feudal England through a series of plays was little for those whose grandsires had followed the history of mankind. Londoners had looked already on a more heart-moving tragedy than 'Hamlet.'"[1]

REFERENCE BOOKS

J. M. MANLY, Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama. (Athenæum Press Series.) A. W. POLLARD, English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes. K. L. BATES, The English Religious Drama.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

It will probably be found best for students to read only a few selected passages here and there from this rough old drama. But certain of the plays have been presented lately by student companies, with as close a reproduction as possible of the mediæval setting, to the delectation alike of actors and audience. The shepherd plays and some of the pageants of the Old Testament lend themselves particularly well to such representation.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

There is material here for a series of valuable lectures. The dramas could be considered and described by cycles, or the treatment could be topical, discussing the humorous elements in the mediæval drama, the poetry, the dramatic structure, the illustrations of contemporary life, the relation to the ritual of the Church, etc.

[1] Katharine Lee Bates.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

I. Chaucerian Imitators

IN some countries there are seasons when autumn and spring meet, so that the year is dying and being born at the same time. Something like this happened in England in the fifteenth century. To all outward seeming, that century was a period of death and sterile decay; but, before its end, little seeds that were to mean a wondrously fair growth were sprouting, unsuspected by men, beneath the surface.

So far as actual achievement above ground goes, however, our eyes rest on decay alone. Almost nothing original was produced in English letters. People had been much, and rightly, impressed with Chaucer; and they took to imitating him, and went on doing so till their works became the shadow of a shadow. Chaucer looked straight at life; but they looked at Chaucer, and their fate is a warning. They did not catch his freshness and humor and keen observant power; they copied his more conventional aspects, his mannerisms, and allegories. These things had been a real expression of men's spirit once. They were fading away when Chaucer revived them, and when his imitators kept them up they grew fainter and fainter.

It must not be supposed that there was no merit in any of these followers of Chaucer; if there were nothing greater awaiting us, we might find pleasure in lingering with them; but it is better to learn about supremely great things first, and then to return, if one will, to the second-rate.

John Lydgate, about 1370 to about 1446.

Lydgate, Hoccleve, and Hawes were the chief of these Chaucerian imitators. Lydgate was a good-tempered, pleasant monk, quite in earnest about his religion, but without what one would call a spiritual vocation. He may have been a little like Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi"; but he solaced himself for his monastic confinement with writing, not with painting, and he did not have so much genius as Lippi. He must have enjoyed his work, though, for he kept on writing hymns and ballads and fables and saint legends and telling old stories over again, till he had produced an average of five thousand verses a year, and left behind him over a hundred and thirty thousand. Virgil, M. Jusserand reminds us with a sigh, wrote in all his life only fourteen thousand. His work is not disagreeable. His "Troy Book," his "Story of Thebes," his "Fall of Princes," are well enough told; but there is nothing vital in them, nothing significant. One feels that if he could only once get down to the truth of his own nature, he might do something really fine. But this he never took the trouble to do. The best way perhaps to appreciate Lydgate is to read Hoccleve; for Hoccleve was even duller than Lydgate. The best thing about him was that he loved Chaucer, whose verse he knew well. His verse is very didactic, rather mournful, and there is a great deal of it.

Thomas Hoccleve, about 1368–69 to about 1450.

So poetry went on, sterile, imitative, and depressing. Meanwhile, not much original work was doing in prose. The most important prose writer in English was a curious man, Reginald Pecock. He attacked Wyclifism and defended the Church, but with such strange weapons that the Church resented his championship, and forced him to burn his books and to make recantation. Pecock was an interesting and original person; the man whom all parties dread and discard usually is.

II. Scotch Literature

But to find anything in literature worth lingering over, one must travel away from weary and battle-beset England, and take refuge in the Kingdom of the North. Scotland had been silent all this time; only, in the fourteenth century, Barbour's "Bruce" had sung of the national conflict against England, and as the fifteenth century wore on some other patriotic poetry was produced. But now a number of voices arise. They sing, they scold, they laugh; there is life in them, and real feeling.

James I, 1394–1437.

The first of these is the voice of a king, a real king, who seems to come from a story-book: James I of Scotland. It is a courtly voice; it belongs to a lover, a sensitive, dreamy man of finest culture. He sings over again what had been imagined before him, but the wonder is that in his case it has all come true. He was in prison, like Palamon and Arcite in the "Knight's Tale," and he saw from his window another Emily walking in the garden: "Ah, sweet, are ye a worldly creature, or heavenly thing in guise of nature?" he

exclaimed in marvelling admiration. She was an earthly creature; her name, Jane Beaufort; his love from that moment, later his loving wife: and the romantic story of his courtship and many other things he wrote in his poem, "The King's Quair," or "King's Book." The poem is modelled after Chaucer, but it has real experience in it; it is written in a seven line stanza, which Chaucer had used, but which has taken since the name of rhyme royal, from the kingly author. Those who wish to know more of the tragic fate of this poet-king of romance may read it in Rossetti's noble ballad, "The King's Tragedy."

Robert Henryson (fl. 1500).

The other Scottish poets are not so courtly. They are real Scotchmen; by and by they will have a younger brother named Burns. Robert Henryson, a schoolmaster, can write, to be sure, a Testament or Will for Chaucer's "Cresside," but he can also put Æsop's Fables into sparkling, spirited, entertaining verse.

William Dunbar, 1460–1530.

William Dunbar, a stronger soul than Henryson, had a wild, exuberant character. In the poems that he imitated from Chaucer, "The Thistle and the Rose," and "The Golden Targe," his pictures are so gorgeous and his colors so intense that we feel that the mark of decay is upon them. His lyrics are charged with a reckless, grotesque, sombre passion; his "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins" and his "Lament for the Makars" come, as all may feel, from the country of Tam o' Shanter.

Gavin Douglas, 1474–1522.

Finally, in this roll of Scottish poets, advances a grave bishop, named Gavin Douglas. Scott knew him well, as "Marmion" can testify. Douglas translated the "Æneid," and the work was important: but he di-

vided the poem by little interludes of his own, describing different aspects of nature, and these are more important still. We escape in them from the eternal May of the fourteenth century; we no longer pluck roses and violets at the same season. We watch the wild storms of the Scottish winter, and the details of the bleak Scotch landscape are studied with loving care.

It is Celtic, this revel of wild nature; all this Scotch poetry suggests a Celtic inspiration, — in its passion for color; in its humor, now sly, now coarse; in the mingling of fun and horror which one gets in Dunbar; in the curious power with which the supernatural note is struck. These things are seldom to be found in the poetry produced in England while the Norman influence was supreme and new. They serve to remind us of the third great racial element which, before the sixteenth century is over, will fully have reasserted itself in English verse.

III. Ballads

We may as well pause here as at any other point to glance at something which has been going on for a long time — ballad-making. For printing is on the way, and ballads will cease. A ballad is a shy thing. If you try to catch and print it, it is likely to run away, and to leave a poor imitated concern in its place. Neither does it like to be asked questions about date or authorship or dry matters of that kind; it knows how to evade very sharp examinations on these lines. So we had better not press many inquiries about the ballads; but if we open

our eyes and ears almost any time from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth, if we slip away from the learned world and play with simple folk and listen, there the ballads will be found. They seem to appear as mysteriously as fairies in a ring on midsummer eve. Where did they come from? Nobody knows, — though a good many are of Scotch descent, as one can tell from their garment of words and from their feelings. Only one thing is clear: they have no relation to the great literary tradition which we have been following from the twelfth century down. They spring straight from the hearts and lips of the common people; no one can ascribe a ballad to a single author; they were sung before they were said. While we read them, we are no longer in the graceful garden close nor in a feudal hall nor a cathedral; we are in the good green wood, with Robin Hood and his merry men, or on the moorland country, under the wide sky where Percy and Douglas fight; or we stand with true Thomas at the spot where three roads meet: the road to heaven, the road to hell, —

> "And see ye not that bonny road,
> Which winds about the fernie brae?
> That is the road to fair Elfland,
> Where you and I this night maun gae."

Down this last road, the road to Fairyland, the ballads lead us again and again. These ballads of superstition come mostly from Scotland, and the Celtic magic is in them. Then we have ballads of border warfare, of domestic story, of pure romance, and, above all, ballads of the wild outlaw life of the

forest. Red blood runs through the veins of the people in the ballads. They move in no conventional world of vision, no pretty sphere of artificial sentiments and graceful manners. Their feet are on the solid earth, and the verse that tells of their loves and fates goes directly to the point: —

"She turned her back unto the room,
Her face unto the wa',
And with a deep and heavy sigh
Her heart it brak in twa."

We are among primeval experiences, elemental passions; we turn to them with great relief after the monotonous echoes of the lettered world in the fifteenth century.

IV. The Decadence of the Middle Ages

But why should the literature of the fifteenth century have been monotonous and sterile? Why, after that brief glory of Chaucer's time, should silence fall? In other countries, notably in Italy, the fifteenth century was an age of fervid creation, a climax in the imaginative power of the race. Why not in England?

Literature in England was apparently dying, because other things greater than literature were dying too.

The Wars of the Roses were the last struggle of feudalism. Knighthood, from a grim or noble reality, was becoming a plaything. The great baronial houses were being swept away. The Peasant Revolt, indeed, had been suppressed, and silent

misery had once more fallen upon the poor; yet, despite the seeming victory of the powers that were, the doom of the great feudal nobility had been pronounced. The whole fabric of mediæval society was undermined and crumbling away. A new social order was approaching.

The religious situation was tragic. In the first half of the century the Lollards had been ruthlessly suppressed, and their leader, Sir John Oldcastle, burnt to death. The Roman Catholic Church seemed wholly triumphant. But not the satire of Chaucer nor the appeals of Langland nor the invective of Wyclif had made her purify her abuses. The stress on imagination and feeling had been overwrought; superstitious excesses had crept in; religion, to a people that had lost all power to follow or understand the offices in Latin, and saw the unworthy lives of throngs of clergy, came to seem like an outworn sham.

It must have been mournful to live in the fifteenth century, to feel the fabric of Church and State crumbling around, yet to have no clear vision of better things to be. The mood of such a period is likely to be tragic, fevered, charged with gloom. Even the imitators of Chaucer have little of his bright spirit, but are addicted to melancholy wails. Extravagance and hysteria mark the last phases of the Ages of Romance. Costume becomes fantastically absurd. Gothic architecture is dying with the middle ages, dying in extravagance on the Continent, in formalism in England. People feel a sense of profound discouragement and exhaustion. At times, reaction from conventionality produces eccentric,

burlesque work, such as that of the curious poet, John Skelton. A fiercely satirical temper is met again and again; the figure of Folly seems with her cap and bells to dominate the scene. A popular German poem, translated by one Barclay, illustrates this temper; the name of the poem is "The Ship of Fools," and it moves to a dreadful climax in the chapter entitled "The Universall or General Ship or Barge," where we see all nations helter-skelter, all sorts and conditions of men, the rich, the poor, laborers, merchants, soldiers, explorers, women, children, —all wearing the livery of Folly, and the aspect of the insane.

Beside the form of Folly, another, yet more terrible, dominated the fifteenth century: this was the form of the Skeleton. The age was morbidly given to meditation on decay and death. "The Art and Craft to know well how to Die" was one of the first books issued from Caxton's press. Homilies on the Day of Judgment, on the Four Last Things, meet us at every turn. Natural enough, then, is the appearance of the skeleton, the physical symbol of the Lord of Terrors. He peeps as an ornament from the illuminated borders of Books of Hours; he is carved in the woodwork of the cathedrals; frightful pageants are held in his honor, pageants of which the famous Danse Macabre gives the suggestion. Finally, the great artist Holbein sums up the spirit of the time in his famous woodcuts of The Dance of Death. The grim figure is everywhere present: leans out behind the preacher in the pulpit, touches on the shoulder the ploughman in the field, watches the miser count his gold, draws the child from the cra-

dle, — is, unseen, the lord of the human race. There is in Holbein's pictures a solemn and eternal truth; there is also a special truth for his own day and generation. This weird apparition had effectively touched the middle ages on the shoulder, and summoned them to their doom.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Good selections from the Chaucerian imitators are found in WARD's English Poets. Selections from the Scottish poets are in "Mediæval Scottish Poetry," Glasgow, 1892. The "Romance of a King's Life," by J. J. JUSSERAND, tells vividly the story of James I, and ROSSETTI's ballad, the "King's Tragedy," is a noble version of his death.

On ballads, the great authority is CHILD's monumental work, "English and Scottish Popular Ballads." A good short collection, with admirable introduction, is that by GUMMERE, in the Athenæum Press series. See, also, PERCY's Reliques, J. RITSON's Ancient Songs and Ballads, K. L. BATES's Ballad Book (Sibley & Ducker).

For general character of period, socially and politically, see DENTON, England in the Fifteenth Century.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

In this period ballads are the most rewarding study for young students. Great ballads, like "Sir Patrick Spens," "The Wife of Usher's Well," portions of "Chevy Chase," and the Robin Hood ballads, may be learned and repeated in class.

Special discussions may be held on outlaw life as shown in the ballads, on nature in the ballads, on the supernatural in the ballads, on the difference between the English and Scottish ballads; also on the art of the ballads, their versification, their figures of speech, their narrative power, their range of feeling, etc.

If Holbein's illustrations of The Dance of Death can be shown to the class, the last part of the chapter will be far more vivid.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

A lecture on the nature element in the Scottish poets would be quite worth while, recalling the class to a line of interest which should have been started in the study of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic literature, and may be in danger of being forgotten by this time. Or a lecture on Dunbar and Henryson, comparing them with Burns, would be interesting.

The Origin of Ballads is a subject rather out of the range of high-school scholars, but a talk by the teacher drawn from Child and Gummere could make the important subject lucid and intelligible. Ballads and folklore in other countries might be compared with those of England, or the class might be told about European forms of ballads found in our own tongue. A lecture on the social and political conditions of the century would be of service.

A study of the ancient chap-books is of value to the student of literature, for they reveal the tastes, tendencies, manners, and customs of the common folk of England, and throw light upon their social and moral conditions. These little books preserved the legends, romances, fairy tales, superstitions, songs, jests, and anecdotes which were handed down orally before the invention of printing and represented the literature of the people of England for nearly four centuries. Only rare specimens are now to be found; the last of the chap-books to disappear were those containing the fairy-tales, legends, and stories the children loved. There is a rich and well catalogued collection of English chap-books in the library of Harvard University, which also contains examples of those of other countries.

James Boswell prefixed to his collection of chap-books the following note: "Having when a boy been much entertained with Jack the Giant-Killer and such little story-books, I have always retained a kind of affection for them. I bought this collection, and had it bound up with the title of 'Curious Productions.'" Sir Walter Scott says of the chap-books: "Once sold at the low and easy price of one half-penny they are now cheaply purchased at their weight in gold." Shakespeare has given us in the *Winter's Tale* a portrait of a chapman in the character of *Autolycus*.

The word *chap* comes from an old word *ceapian* "to buy and sell," and appears in such words as Eastcheap, Cheapside, both names of localities in London where much buying and selling was done.

PART III

THE RENAISSANCE



CHAPTER I

THE REBIRTH

THE word "renaissance" means rebirth, and it is not too strong a word for what happened to the nations of Europe when the middle ages were exhausted. However great they were, these middle ages, they were bound to pass away sooner or later. Every order of civilization has its term. Men are always forgetting this, and thinking that the order in which they live is final. Most people think so to-day about our industrial democracy; and people in the fifteenth century believed that feudalism and the Roman Catholic Church could never lose their hold on the English race. They had lasted so long, these mighty powers! longer than the memory of men's great-great-grandfathers! When symptoms of decay began to appear in them, people became frightened. They fell into those moods of lethargy or recklessness which we described in the last chapter, they took to fearing that Death reigned supreme.

They were right in thinking that the old was doomed, but they did not know what great new things were to come. Even in literature, the noblest and most beautiful achievements of the race were yet to be. Think of the state of English literature in 1500. There was no Shakespeare, no Milton, no Spenser, no Bacon, no Tennyson, nor Wordsworth, nor Carlyle, nor Dickens. Chaucer was the only

author of the first order of importance who had yet appeared.

The Renaissance and the Reformation.

The new experience which was to come to England had already taken brilliant form in Italy. Strictly and literally speaking, we call it the Renaissance. This was a secular movement; it meant an enlarged hunger for learning and knowledge, a quickened sense for beauty and for art. Meanwhile in Germany a little later a religious movement, not wholly different from the Renaissance in cause, produced a very different result: the Reformation.

Separate in Europe.

The Renaissance and the Reformation were at bottom from the same source,—the new craving for inward freedom. But they were strangely different in manifestation, and as a rule they appealed to different races. The interesting thing about the early phases of the new life in England was that the two impulses were combined. In Italy the Renaissance tended to irreligion: in Germany, the Reformation did little or nothing to foster art or letters. The English, a race at once Teutonic and Latin, seemed for a time to hold the two forces in a noble harmony. Later the two currents, even in England, separated. One set toward Puritanism; the other drove men back within the horizons of earth, and fixed their eyes on its séductions and their hearts on its desires with results that we shall see. For a long time, however, the friendly interplay of the forces making toward religious and toward secular freedom, toward reformed faith on the one hand and enlarged learning on the other, produced consequences in England such as were not to be found in any other country. And, to the end, the ethical

United in England.

Germanic strain in the sturdy English race prevented them from falling into the excesses of the later Renaissance, that disfigured the alluring but corrupt Italy of the Borgias.

The Renaissance

The rediscovery of the classic past was the chief inspiration of the Renaissance. Suddenly, the world awakened to knowledge of the literature and art of Greece and Rome. In 1453, the fall of Constantinople sent the Greek scholars who had gathered there, flying with their precious manuscripts to Italy, where they received a warm welcome. George Eliot's "Romola" gives a fine picture of the eager delight with which the new study was welcomed at Florence. Greek had hardly been known at all in Western Europe during the middle ages, and, indeed, many of the greatest of the Latin writers also had become merely names to conjure with. It was not long before this enthusiasm for Greek spread from Italy to England. Soon all men and many women of intellect were thirstily imbibing the new knowledge. Forgotten poets, orators, historians, philosophers, resumed their rightful place as intellectual leaders of the race. Aristotle had been known throughout the middle ages, and had absolutely controlled mediæval thought. Now Plato was discovered, and was henceforth to affect men's spiritual moods, if not their intellectual systems, more profoundly than ever Aristotle had done. People were no longer to think of Virgil as a mighty magician; they were to try their hand at translating him. They were to read Homer, the Greek tragedians, the Latin moralists, all the spokesmen of the past. The arts of the ancient world, now first revealed, afforded standards for a

The revival of the classics.

perfection of form, for a clearness of thought, of which the middle ages had never dreamed. The glorious achievement of men who had shaped laws, civilizations, creeds, quite different from their own, was made clear to them. Only in a wise knowledge of the past has clear progress ever been made toward the future. No wonder that the generation to whom this knowledge first came leaped suddenly into maturity.

The discovery of the New World.

To strengthen this expansion of men's thoughts came the discovery of America. It is almost impossible to realize to-day the state of mind of people who lived and died in contented ignorance of the size and shape and contents of this great home of ours. But people had all been so busy thinking of heaven and hell that they had not troubled their minds much about the shape of the visible earth. They knew the Mediterranean and the countries around it. Far away, beyond, were mysterious lands where people were black, or had one eye, perhaps, or carried their heads beneath their shoulders. They were very rich, some of these lands, and full of enchantments. So dim reports of Asia and Africa floated in the air; but of our whole great America, not an inkling did men have. And this was only a little more than four hundred years ago!

Then began the great voyages of which we know: the voyages of Columbus, of Cabot, of Americus Vespucius, and the rest. Every one knows Columbus's date, whatever else he may forget; it was only thirty years after, in 1522, that the globe was conquered, circumnavigated for the first time. Nor did these events end the Era of Discovery: long

after this, till the last of the sixteenth century, through the days of Drake and Raleigh, lasted the stirring romance of adventure and exploration.[1] At first, people, in the weary, satirical mood of the fifteenth century, failed to kindle with any enthusiasm at the opening of the new lands. We find Barclay, in the "Ship of Fools," explaining that Ferdinand, king of Spain, had discovered many new regions of late, very far away; and the moral he draws is, "So you may see how foolish it is to devote one's self to the unsure and vain science of geography, since none can know the earth's surface perfectly." It was not long, however, before men grew ashamed of such discouraged sentiments, and deduced more inspiriting conclusions. The spirit of Odin the Wanderer, the god of their fathers, seized them; and whether they pushed out themselves to brave perils unguessed, to win distant lands, to explore and to conquer, or whether they stayed at home and awaited reports from those who sailed, we must think of them for a hundred years as constantly a-quiver with a great expectation. At no other time has there been just this situation. The facts about the world were actually known in outline; people realized that this whole earth was theirs, their very own, to explore and subdue at will. And yet, concerning the details of this their earth-heritage they knew nothing. They had not unlearned yet the old belief in the supernatural. The Fountain of Youth might ever lie behind the next mountain-range; in some unsuspected isle in far-off seas might be waiting the

[1] Copernicus, who first taught the true relation of our world to the starry universe, died in 1543.

Earthly Paradise. Alas! we know better now, nor do we expect that any explorer will ever find the fabled island of the West which "looked like an Eden, away, far away."

So men discovered, within one short fifty years, the past of their own race, and the present of the world around them. The effect of this double discovery was naturally to fix their attention and their enthusiasm upon this actual earth on which we live. They turned away from the dreams and visions so dear to the middle ages. They turned to "this very world: which is the world," — so Wordsworth tells us, — "wherein we find our happiness, or not at all." An immense desire for knowledge took possession of people: an impulse toward an universal inquiry, a longing to explore the great new worlds waiting discoveries in the sphere of thought, as well as in the solitude of tropic seas. A revolt set in against restraint, convention, authority, in every direction.

The Reformation.

This movement of expansion was greatly strengthened and ennobled in England by the Protestant Reformation. Here is not the place to dwell on it. The efforts after religious freedom in the time of Wyclif had been suppressed; in the late fifteenth century, the spirit rose again and proved itself immortal. But not without a struggle. Through the times of Henry VIII and Edward VI, through the lurid age of Queen Mary, on into the age of Elizabeth, the Reformed Church was winning its way. The mediæval ideal of asceticism was rejected; a new emphasis was placed on the freedom of individual conscience. The dominion of Rome was driven

back inch by inch, and English Christianity became once more independent of foreign control.

The invention of printing.

And so the zest for living came back to men: at first slowly, then with a mighty rush. At the end of the fifteenth century appeared a new art to help the new spirit: the art of printing. It revolutionized letters; it all but revolutionized the intellectual life. It was a mechanical thing, but one of those mechanical things that helps to set free the human spirit.

"Mere mechanical help? So the hand gives a toss
To the falcon, — aloft once, spread pinions and fly,
Beat air far and wide, up and down and across!
My Press strains a-tremble: whose masterful eye
Will be first, in new regions, new truth to descry?

"Far and wide, North and South, East and West, have dominion
O'er Thought, winged wonder, O Word! Traverse world
In sun-flash and sphere-song! Each beat of thy pinion
Bursts night, beckons day: once Truth's banner unfurled
Where's Falsehood? Sun-smitten, to nothingness hurled!" [1]

William Caxton.

It was sometime between 1470 and 1480 that Caxton, a good Englishman who had long sojourned in the Low Countries and had learned this strange new trade there, set up his press in London. Printing had already been known on the Continent for over thirty years. They are strange-looking objects to us to-day, these early books which issued from the first presses; heavy, enormous, ungainly volumes, printed in black-letter, which is often beautiful but

[1] Browning, "Fust and his Friends."

very hard to read. Almost every library has facsimiles if not originals of some of these old books; and one feels very thoughtful as one gazes at them or lifts them, thinking what the printed book has meant to the world. At first, as was natural, the new art served old affections, and the list of books which issued from Caxton's press reads almost like a review of mediæval literature. But whatever their subject, these old volumes speak more of the future than of the past or present; for their very existence proves that the modern world was born.

REFERENCE BOOKS

J. A. SYMONDS, The Renaissance in Italy, the standard history of the most important phase of the Renaissance; also SYMONDS' article on the Renaissance in "Encyclopædia Britannica," ninth edition. JACOB BURCKHARDT, The Renaissance in Italy.

WILLIAM BLADES's Life and Typography of William Caxton contains numerous facsimile cuts; also, shorter 1 vol. work, The Biography and Typography of William Caxton. G. H. PUTNAM, Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages. A. W. POLLARD, Early Illustrated Books.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

It would be valuable here, if practicable, to illustrate the change that was passing over Europe by brief, simple talks on the painting and architecture of the Renaissance as compared with those of the middle ages. To show a class photographs from Cimabue, Giotto, Botticelli, and Raphael, with simple comments, makes the great development far more vivid than any mere discussion of literature can do.

A lecture on the history of printed books, with something about the great early printers, is as interesting as a romance, and would help to awaken in students enthusiasm for the beautiful bodies of books.

CHAPTER II

LEARNING AND POETRY UNDER HENRY VIII

I. The New Learning

THE Universities had a great part to play in the English revival of learning. Oxford and Cambridge had become rather arid and dusty places at this time. They had betaken themselves to repeating intellectual conventions: it is a way Universities have. But now a new spirit stirred in them, spread from them, and sent a quickening thrill through the length and breadth of England. This, too, occasionally happens in an academic centre; and a great home of learning must always live in hopes of a visitation of this kind.

The work of the universities.

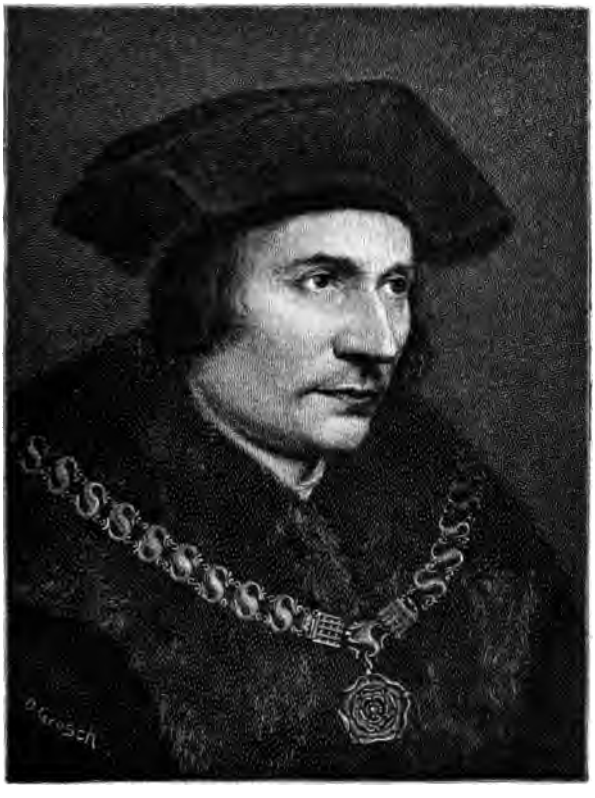
The introduction of the study of Greek was the chief influence that re-created English scholarship. "The students," wrote an eye-witness at Oxford in the early sixteenth century, "rush to Greek letters. They endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger, in pursuit of them." It was still earlier, in 1497, that the famous Dutch scholar Erasmus, going to Oxford because he was too poor to visit the goal of his longings, Italy, found himself amazed and delighted at the intellectual enthusiasms and sound scholarship of the place. His soul, an-hungered for Greek learning, met the full gratification of its desires. "I have found in Oxford," he writes, "so much polish and learning

Erasmus, 1467–1536.

that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? When did nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Thomas More?" A close and tender bond of personal friendship sprang up among these eager scholars, who felt themselves united in as high a quest as were ever the knights of old: the quest for spiritual and intellectual light, the campaign against that worst of dragons, Ignorance. The records of the affectionate, witty, earnest intercourse of the little group are fascinating reading. All of them were men who left their mark on their generation. All blended, in a rather unusual fashion, the temper of the reformer and the scholar, of the keen critic and the devout believer.

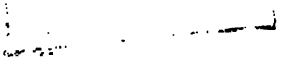
John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, 1502.

The brilliant work of Erasmus does not belong to the story of English letters. Among the Englishmen, we must not pass by, without one loving word, the beautiful figure of John Colet. He afterward became the Dean of St. Paul's, and by his establishment of grammar schools on a new system, laid the foundations for a sound education for the people at large. "Lift up your little white hands," wrote Colet to his young scholars, "for me which prayeth for you to God." Colet was one of that long and honorable line of English Churchmen who have combined a passion for sound learning with devout faith, with simplicity and love. He was a true descendant of Bede.



THOMAS MORE
1480-1535

[redacted]



Sir Thomas More, 1480–1535.

But of all these first men of the modern world, the most interesting and attractive is undoubtedly Sir Thomas More, one of the noblest Englishmen, statesmen, dreamers, Christians, that have ever lived. His great book, the "Utopia," shines like a beacon light at the entrance to the new life of the nation. He was a man placed high in distinction. From a gracious boyhood passed in the household of a great Church dignitary, he went to the University. Thence he passed to a steadily rising eminence in a legal career; till the young king, Henry VIII, himself one of the most ardent patrons of the New Learning, singled him out for favor, and finally made him Vice-Chancellor of England, as well as his own close personal friend.

More carried his honors serenely. His joy was in his friends, his books, his family life; he was a most lovable, humorous, kindly, clear-thinking man. "Sweetness and light," the qualities so praised by Matthew Arnold, serve perfectly to describe his character and his work. He lived in soberness, too, near to the thought of God. He was a devout Roman Catholic, with no sympathy for the new faith. It is strange to think of an exponent of the New Learning and an enthusiast for Greek letters wearing, unknown to any, a hair shirt next his skin.

More's life presents another strange paradox. He was a radical social dreamer; yet he was high in the counsels of kings. No one was more alive to this paradox, and the insecurity it implied, than he; and he could not have been much surprised when the sunshine of the royal favor deserted him. His conscience could not accept the claims of the king to be

Head of the visible Church, and to divorce a wife when it pleased him. He was pursued with the demand for an oath he could not take, disgraced, imprisoned, and, in 1535, beheaded. He died, martyr at once to faith and to freedom: the Roman Church did well when, in 1886, she added him to her list of the Blessed.

More's writings came in his early life, before the storms of his career as a statesman. His "Lives" of Edward V and of Richard III may be said to mark the beginning of modern history, and their fine and dignified manner certainly promises a new development of English prose. But the book by which he lives, the epitome of the best intuitions and aims of the New Learning, was no story of what is; it was a vision of what might be, — the tale of the land of Utopia.

The "Utopia," 1516.

The book dates from 1515 and 1516. It was written in Latin, — still the language of scholarship; but before half a century was over, one Ralph Robinson had put it into rich and nobly cadenced English, and in this form, as well as in more modern translations, it is accessible to us all. The "Utopia," like so many books in the middle ages, is a dream; but a dream of how new an order! For it tells, not of saints or angels, or monsters or devils, but of happy, laborious, natural men and women, living in a region which is indeed mysterious, — non-existent if you will, — but which, if it were to exist anywhere, would exist here on this earth. The "Utopia" is the romance of an ideal society, and audacious was the man who dared to dream it! The speculative freedom, the longing for a human blessedness, fos-

tered by the Renaissance, had entered More's spirit; and they enabled him to show us a new earth — to behold the first, though not the last vision seen by modern Europe, of a perfect social state. The bitter injustice which he saw all about him has yielded in his dream to a universal sharing of happy work and simple life. Men have made the earth at last a home, not of luxury for some, but of comfort for all.

Probably the part of the "Utopia" which to More's contemporaries seemed most preposterously impossible was that in which he told them that in Utopia every man was free to worship God according to his own conscience, without compulsion or persecution. Roman Catholic as he was, More put forth in this part of his book a ringing manifesto for religious freedom. Many fires were to burn, the anguish of a great exile was to be suffered by our own forefathers, before his prophecy should be fulfilled. But fulfilled it is. We cannot say so much for the part of the book that describes industrial and social freedom. Not yet. Some people like Utopia; some do not. Some tell us that the name of the country will always be Utopia, which means Nowhere; some agree with a punning contemporary of More's, who says that the real name of the land is and shall be Eutopia, the land where life is blessed.

The "Utopia" is the greatest among all the books of imaginary travels written during the Renaissance. If we compare it with the Travels of the pseudo-Mandeville, so dear to the middle ages, we shall see how the mood of men has changed. It has changed from the hunger for marvels to the hunger for justice. The book is the first expression, after

Langland, of the passion for a social ideal. Plenty of such books have followed it. In modern times, we have regained a little the spirit of hope; and various people, both Americans and Englishmen, poets, novelists, economists even, have travelled to Utopia and brought back fresh tidings of the country. But none have told about it so delightfully as Sir Thomas More.

II. The New Art

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503–1542. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, 1517–1547.

The Renaissance brought to England an enlarged learning and a quickened thought; it brought a new literary art as well. This new art found its first expression in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, during the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, were the men who practised it first.

The influence of Italy on the English Renaissance.

In Italy, long before in the fourteenth century, the spirit of the Renaissance had already been at work, and the poets, especially Petrarch, had felt all these things. Now, at last, England as a whole began to respond to Italian influence; and from this time all through the age of Elizabeth, this influence is to be in manifold phases dominant, quickening, mighty.

Henry VIII was certainly an unattractive person in some of his aspects; and he put Sir Thomas More to death. But he was always a polished gentleman who loved art and learning. Wyatt and Surrey were both noblemen attached to this court. They were courtiers, lovers, and only incidentally poets as well. Both of them wrote love-poems in the Italian fashion. Wyatt, who was fourteen years older than

Surrey, wrote in a manner distinctly more archaic, but at times with a certain seriousness and weight which are impressive. Surrey, the more musical versifier, seems to have had also the sweeter nature. The poetry of neither, however, has very great intrinsic beauty; but it is highly significant because in it is caught the first note of a new music: —

> "Calm is the sea, the waves work less and less:
> So am not I, whom love, alas! doth wring,
> Bringing before my face the great increase
> Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing."[1]

That is not much in itself, perhaps, but listening to it we realize that in another fifty years we shall be listening to Shakespeare. The music is a little uncertain and faint, but it is surely there.

We must remember that by this time the language of Chaucer was as different from ordinary speech as it is to-day, and that people had not our knowledge of how to read his verse. Neither had they any idea of measure or prosody. The poets had really no English models. All their work was of necessity tentative; and it was only the sentiment and the exquisite melody of Italian models, especially the lyrics of Petrarch, that enabled them to write gracefully at all.

In both Wyatt and Surrey, the melancholy and the aptitude for religious and social meditation of the Teutonic race play strangely through the Italian grace and sweetness. Wyatt writes in his later life grave satires; Surrey translates the Book of Ecclesiastes and paraphrases the Psalms. Each had a

[1] Surrey. From a sonnet in "Tottel's Miscellany."

Work of Wyatt and Surrey.

romantic life, on which we may only touch. Several of Wyatt's poems gain a personal interest and pathos from the belief of some critics that they commemorate his hopeless passion for Anne Boleyn. The autobiographical note is yet clearer in Surrey, and it is a note rarely indeed heard in older poets. But Surrey's tragic end casts a shadow for us over his most light-hearted pages: like so many others in those days he was accused of treason, and, in 1547, executed, like More, on the block.

It was Wyatt who first introduced sonnets into English verse, and the gift to us was a great one. Surrey also wrote sonnets, not confining himself to the Italian form used by Wyatt, but experimenting with that freer movement of quatrains and a final couplet, which was to be glorified by Shakespeare. But to Surrey alone belongs the great honor of introducing to England that poetic form which was to be the instrument of its noblest writers, — blank verse. This he did in his translation of two books from Virgil's "Æneid." Since the old alliterative line had died, there had been no dignified standard line in English. No one could guess from Surrey's use of blank verse the harmonies which it was to yield in the hands of Shakespeare and Milton; yet to be the first technically to use such an instrument is to have valid claim to a place in English letters.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Green, Short History of the English People, Ch. VI, Sec. IV, The New Learning. Ten Brink, Vol. III, Book VI, Sec. IV. Seebohm, The Oxford Reformers. J. A. Froude, Life of Erasmus, esp. Chs. III, VI, VII. Emerton, Life of Erasmus.

ERASMUS, The Praise of Folly; Pilgrimages of St. Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury, ed. by J. G. NICHOLS. Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet, tran. by J. H. LUPTON. ANNIE MANNING, The Household of Sir Thomas More (a charming story). V. D. SCUDDER, Social Ideals in English Letters, Ch. II. MORE'S Utopia, Camelot edition, with Introduction by MAURICE ADAMS, and Life of More, by his son-in-law ROPER. In Ideal Commonwealths, ed. by HENRY MORLEY; ed. by WILLIAM MORRIS, with short Introduction, of great value, in the Kelmscott Press; scholar's edition, by J. H. LUPTON, with Latin text and Robynson's translation. See also MORE'S Life of Pico della Mirandola, an Italian scholar and Christian of the Renaissance, ed. J. M. RIGG. Wyatt and Surrey are well handled in the last volume of TEN BRINK. Selections from their works will be found in WARD'S English poets, Vol. I, and in TOTTEL'S Miscellany, reprinted by ARBER.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Free summary and discussion is most valuable on the "Utopia." If Morris's "News from Nowhere" and Bellamy's "Looking Backward" can be read, so much the better. More's noble personality should be brought home to the class, as can easily be done through the abundant biographical material.

Wyatt and Surrey can be lightly passed over, with readings perhaps from the extracts in Ward's "English Poets." Lovelier lyrics are waiting.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Life in Oxford during the Revival of Learning; Plato's "Republic" and its Influence on More; Modern Social Dreams, similar to the "Utopia"; Petrarch and his Influence on the English Lyric.

CHAPTER III

OUTLINES OF ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

The time of pause.

ONE would have supposed that after More and Wyatt and Surrey, the new impulse in art and thought would have produced a new literature at once. But this did not happen. Political and religious distractions prevented. The short reign of Edward VI. produced one noble monument of English prose, the first version of the "Book of Common Prayer," and one rude, homely voice, the voice of Latimer, was uplifted in accents that recall Wyclif and Langland. Then came the reign of Queen Mary, and small wonder is it that the most popular book it produced was Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," in its early Latin dress. Men in England could hardly warble madrigals while they knew that other men were burning at the stake.

Even after the accession of Elizabeth, the terrified hush that had fallen upon the nation continued. It took twenty years for England to rally. Elizabeth became queen in 1558; it was not till 1579 that the Elizabethan era of English literature is usually said to have begun, with the publication of a series of delicate pastoral poems, Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar." Before this time, there had been faint attempts and promises, but nothing for which a book of this scope need pause.

But when this literary period once began, it soon

The Elizabethan age.

became, not only the most wonderful period that England has yet known, but one of the most wonderful ever known by any country. The victory of the Reformed Faith was assured. The young nation was at peace within, enjoying a new commercial expansion and prosperity; abroad, she was measuring herself in heroic warfare against Spain, an heroic foe. Men looked away from the heavens, but beheld with a thrill of freedom the horizons of earth ever widening, receding, beckoning, and felt themselves, with Puck, able to clap a girdle round the earth in forty minutes. Come softly; for we are approaching the days of Shakespeare. They are the days of Spenser too, of Sir Philip Sidney, of Bacon, Hooker, Raleigh, Ben Jonson, — the days of the sweetest lyric England has ever heard, of a noble reflective and imaginative prose, of a supreme drama.

The literary activity under the great queen began, as we have seen, in 1579. To discuss the quarter century that followed, we shall need as much space as for all the mediæval centuries put together. The nation, in this short time, passed through nearly all the experiences of human life, from youth to manhood; and before we study its literary expression in detail, we will glance briefly at the different phases of experience, or different moods, which underlay the literature.

Pre-Dramatic Period, 1579–1590.

At first, when toward the beginning of Elizabeth's reign the mysterious impulse toward artistic expression began to stir, men did not take it very seriously. They toyed with life and art, poetry and prose. They were "empassioned," to use a fine word of Spenser's, with felicity of phrase; they tried count-

less literary experiments. But through these experiments, often childish enough, breathed inspiration. A youthful delight in life pervaded the nation. This early Elizabethan literature was not profound nor comprehensive. It proceeded mainly from the court and the gentry; it was aristocratic, and beset by little affectations. And yet, it has a joyous, eager magic, never to be forgotten.

A wealth of lyrics is the most notable and delightful product of this period. Nothing has ever equalled the marvellous lyrical development of those days; we have had many noble lyrics since, which have added glory to our race, but we have never been able to recapture that first fine careless rapture. At the same time, many other literary forms were appearing, with the same strange mixture of experiment and inspiration. Criticism in prose sprang up; art-prose was feeling its way. The great Elizabethan translations began, and prose of adventure and patriotism started with a splendid impetus. This period of romance, of poetic experiment, of keen enthusiasm for adventure and for learning, moved to its climax in a great romantic epic, in which all these elements blend, and are transfigured by the inward radiance of imagination. The first Elizabethan period begins with the publication of Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar," in 1579; it may be said to close with the publication of the first three books of his "Faerie Queene," in 1590.

Dramatic Period, 1590–1602.

The rise of the drama.

Now the mood of the nation was to alter; it was to play with life no longer. The literature of the next period was to express an overwhelming reality of experience and of passion. Soon, in three or four



FRANCIS BACON
1561-1626



years at latest, will be acted "Romeo and Juliet," and that means that one poet, at least, has power to lay bare the depths of passion; already, in 1587, Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" had struck a solemn tragic note, like a warning bell. The day belongs to a new art; and during all the rest of Elizabeth's reign, and through the reign of her successor, the chief imaginative energies of the English race are absorbed in that great creation, the romantic drama.

Not that other literary forms are superseded. The lyric production goes on unchecked, changing its mood, but if anything increasing in beauty as it presses through self-conscious art closer and closer to the heart of experience. Translations multiply, and patriotic prose is glowing still. Reflective prose rises in Hooker, and finds a different but equally brilliant adept in Bacon. But the drama overshadows all, and that is because it is the fullest expression of life. It is not necessarily written by gentlemen, or courtiers, or saints. Far behind us are the days when all literature proceeded from chivalry or from the Church. It slowly escapes from mannerism and convention, and grows stronger as it goes on.

Meanwhile, after 1590, during the preponderance of the drama, we may trace various phases of experience. The nation shook off its affectations, emerged from experiment, and gained a wonderful gift of self-expression, personal or sympathetic. For a time, the joy of life and the marvel thereof was still what Elizabethan literature chiefly rendered. But the sense of power and pleasure did not last. A deeper quality and a sadder crept in; spontaneity faded. The effort after form was not so marked as

in the first period, but an effort in thought became evident. Men began to record less, to philosophize, to meditate, more. Suddenly, tragedy is with us; a great tragedy, before which we bow our heads, — the tragedy of "Hamlet." All these phases can be followed by any sensitive person who scrutinizes year by year the output in prose and poetry during the last twelve years of the queen's reign. The first Essays of Bacon, published in 1597, may be said to usher in the later mood; or better still, the sonnets of Shakespeare, of which we know that some at least were in existence by 1598. Indeed, the work of Shakespeare completely covers and represents all this development.

Experience did not stop here; it went straight on into new phases. But we have reached the end of the reign of the great queen. It was presumably in 1602 that "Hamlet" was acted, and from the "Shepherd's Calendar" to "Hamlet" is a long enough journey for one chapter to review at a glance, though any one who likes can follow the story without break to the death of Shakespeare.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Historical. GREEN, History of England, Ch. VII, Secs. V–VIII. FROUDE, History of England. TRAILL, Social England, Vol. III. THORNBURY, Shakespeare's England; CREIGHTON, The Age of Elizabeth. GOADBY, The England of Shakespeare. W. B. RYE, England as seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James. HARRISON'S England (the best contemporary description, from Holinshed's "Chronicle." Reprinted in the Camelot series). WALTER SCOTT, Kenilworth. CHARLES KINGSLEY, Westward Ho!

Literary. SAINTSBURY, Elizabethan Literature. DAVID HANNAY, The Later Renaissance. MORLEY, English Writers,

Vols. IX, X, XI. TAINE, English Literature, Bk. II. COURTHOPE, History of English Poetry, Vol. II. JUSSERAND, The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The dry facts of Elizabethan literary chronology should be accurately learned in outline by the student; the outline will be filled in with the study of later chapters. It is important, as this great period is approached, that it should be made, so far as possible, a living reality to the student. Readings from Harrison, from trustworthy novels, as well as from standard histories, may lead to topics on such subjects as Elizabethan costume, building, cooking, manners and customs, town life, country life, etc.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

If students are unfamiliar with the history of the period, an outline lecture on it is highly desirable, for politics and literature are more closely connected in the age of Elizabeth than in many periods of our literature.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY
1500	John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, d. 1470. "Translation of Cicero de Amicitia." (An English scholar, famed in the schools of Italy and England.) Benedict Burgh. "Translation of Cato's Morals." Sir Thomas Malory. "Morte d'Arthur," written ab. 1470, pr. 1485. William Caxton (the printer). "The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy," — finished at Cologne, 1471; first English book made by Caxton. "The Game and Play of Chesse," 1471; said to be the first book printed in England. "The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers," first book that bears the inscription, "Imprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmynstre." (Caxton's translations are in the midland English from which our modern English was developed.) Sir Thomas More, 1480–1535. "Utopia," 1516; translated into English by Ralph Robinson, 1551.	Gringoire. "Jeu du Prince des Scots," 1511. G. Rucellai. "Rosamunda," 1515. Ariosto. "Orlando Furioso," 1516. "General Collection of Spanish Romances," 1516. Luther. "Translation of New Testament," 1523. Guevara. "Libro Aureo," 1529.	Cornelius Vitelli teaches Greek at Oxford, 1488. Grocyn teaches Greek at Oxford, 1491. Erasmus lands in England, 1497. Sebastian Cabot lands in America, 1497. Thomas Linacre, 1460–1524. Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, 1505. Battle of the Spurs and of Flodden, 1513. Wolsey, Chief Minister, 1513. Field of the Cloth of Gold, 1519. Persecution of Protestants, 1527. Henry VIII, 1509–1547. "Supreme Head of the Church of England," 1531. Acts of Supremacy and Succession, 1534. Suppression of Monasteries, 1535–1536. First Poor Law, 1535.	Spain conquers Cuba. Diving Bells in use. Albrecht Durer (p, engr), 1471–1528. Giorgione (p), 1478–1511. Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci, 1499, 1501, 1503. Raphael (p), 1483–1520. Reformation in Germany, 1517–1532. Fire Engines and Gun Locks in use, 1518. Charles V, 1500–1558. Roman School of Painting established. Luther burns the Pope's Bull, 1520. Michael Angelo (p), 1475–1564. Silk made in France, 1521. Diet of Worms, 1521. Globe circumnavigated Sept., 1522. Peasants' War, 1525.

1500	"History of Edward V and Richard III," 1557. Etc. Lord Berners, 1467–1533. "Translation of Froissart's Chronicle," 1523–1525. Etc.			
1525	William Tyndale, 1485(?)–1536. "Translation of the New Testament," 1525, 1534, 1536. "Translation of the Pentateuch," 1530. Etc. Sir David Lindsay, 1490(?)–1555. The last of the Scottish school, a poet and reformer.	Machiavelli. "Del Principe," 1532. (Written, 1513.) Rabelais. "Gargantua," 1533. Calvin, 1509–1565. "Institutiones," 1536. Death of Erasmus, 1536. Gazetta published at Venice, 1536. Paracelsus, d. 1541. Copernicus, d. 1543. "De Revolutionibus Cœlestium Orbium," 1543.	Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536–1537. Fall of Cromwell, 1543. Edward VI, 1547–1553. Mary Stuart sent to France, 1548. Mary Tudor, 1553–1558. Lady Jane Grey beheaded, 1554. Persecution of Protestants begins, 1555. Latimer burned, 1555. Cranmer burned, 1556.	Titian (p), 1477–1576. Confession of Augsburg, 1530. Foundation of Jesuit Order, 1534. Hans Holbein (p), 1498–1559. Benvenuto Cellini (sc), 1500–1571. Council of Trent, 1545–1563. Persecution of Witches. Escurial, in Spain, designed, 1567.
1550	John Heywood, 1506(?)–1565. "The Four P's," a merry Interlude of a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potecary, and a Pedlar. (A writer of interludes.) Etc. Nicholas Udall, 1504(?)–1556. "Ralph Roister Doister," first English comedy; acted bet. 1534 and 1541; pr. 1566. Etc. Miles Coverdale, 1488–1568. "Translation of the Bible," 1535; pr. in England, 1537. "Cromwell's Bible," 1539 (revision by Coverdale of his own and Tyndale's). Rogers. "Matthew's Bible," pr. abroad, 1537.			

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1550	"Taverner's Bible," 1539. "Cranmer's Bible" (the Great Bible), 1540. Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503–1542. "Songs and Sonnets in Tottel's Miscellany," 1557. "English Litany," 1543. Roger Ascham, 1515–1568. "Toxophilus," 1544. "The Schoolmaster," 1570. Etc. "Order of the Communion," 1548. "Book of Common Prayer." Edward VI's First Book came into use, 1549. Second Book, 1552. Cranmer, 1489–1556. "Catechism," 1548. Etc. Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, 1491–1555. "Sermon on the Ploughers," 1549, pr. 1562. Etc. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, ab. 1517–1547. "Translation of Virgil's Æneid," 1553(?), 1557.	Tasso. "Aminta," 1573.	Elizabeth, 1558–1603. Elizabeth restores Royal Supremacy and "English Prayer Book, 1559. Renaissance Style in English architecture, ab. 1550–1650.	Alvah in the Netherlands, 1567–1573. Giovanni da Ponte, 1512–1597. (Bridges of Rialto and Sighs.) Field Glasses used, 1570.

1550	"Songs and Sonnets," 1557. "Paraphrases of certain Psalms." "Tottel's Miscellany," containing sonnets and lyrics by Wyatt and Surrey, 1557. "Mirror for Magistrates," first edition, 1559; second, 1563; the latter contained Sackville's Induction. (A collection of tragic poems modelled after Boccaccio's "Fall of Princes," which Lydgate had already imitated. At least seven poets contributed to it, but Sackville's poem is the only one of importance.) "The Geneva Bible," 1560. "The Thirty-nine Articles," 1560. John Foxe, 1517–1587. "The Book of Martyrs," 1563. "The Bishops' Bible," 1568. "Theatre of Voluptuous Worldlings," 1569. (Containing early poems by Spenser.) Sackville and Norton. "Ferrex and Porrex" ("Gorboduc," authorized edition), 1571.		First Public Theatre, in Blackfriars, 1576. Drake sails around the world, 1577.	Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 1572. University of Leyden, 1575. William the Silent of Orange, 1533–1584.
1575	George Gascoigne, 1536(?)–1577. "The Steel Glass," a satirical poem, 1576. Etc.			

THE EARLY RENAISSANCE — *Continued*

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1575	"Paradise of Dainty Devices," 1576, 1577, 1578, 1580, 1585, 1596, 1600. Ralph Holinshed, d. 1580. "Chronicle," 1577. "Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions," 1578.			

1. In England the Renaissance and the Reformation went hand in hand.

This is a period of enthusiasm for the classics, especially Greek, in the English universities.

The translation of the Bible, the Compilation of the Prayer Book, and the adoption of the English Litany should be noted in this period.

2. This is the day of the great Italian painters and sculptors.

3. Collections of lyrics were very popular at this period. The titles of these collections are varied and fantastic.

4. sc. = sculptor.

CHAPTER IV

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY ✓

Sir Philip Sidney, 1554–1586.

THE literature of the Renaissance differs from that of the middle ages. It is no longer an anonymous, collective matter, expressing the passion of many; it comes straight from the heart of individuals. These men are often known to us in history; they reveal themselves in their works; and we may make friends of them if we will.

Sidney's character.

Let us try to make a friend of Sir Philip Sidney. If we do so, we shall learn to know "a noble and matchless gentleman," as a contemporary calls him, and we shall fully understand the temper and achievement of the early Elizabethan age; for his shining figure gathers into itself all the light of that great dawn. Sidney was born in 1554, of high and glorious lineage; and well he became his birth. Even as a child, he was singularly attractive, "with such staidness of mind," writes a dear, life-long friend, "lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years. His talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind." He grew up no prig nor pedant, but a brilliant young nobleman, the chief ornament of the radiant court. He had, in common with many of the choice spirits of his day, a genius for friendship. "A sweete attractive kind of grace" shone we are told, from his countenance. Foreign

travel, during which he visited Venice, where the magnificent art of Veronese was in full play, completed his education; and he returned to England, to be the darling both of court and people, and to be sent abroad, while still a mere youth of twenty-two, on important diplomatic missions. His career and his reputation rose higher and higher; but not for long. For in 1586 he died of a wound received at the battle of Zutphen. He had fought valiantly as he had lived nobly; but he is remembered and his name has become a household word, less from his courage than for the sweet courtesy and unselfish thought for others that marked him in his mortal agony. "Thy necessity is greater than mine," said Sidney, yielding to a wounded soldier, "ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle," the water which he was raising to his own parched lips.

Sidney summed up all that his time held dear. He was courtier, nobleman, statesman, warrior, gentleman. He was a lover, too, — and he was also a critic, a novelist, and a poet. In his literary work, we see all the characteristics of the period: its affectations and experiments; its high romantic temper, its lyrical impulse, its intellectual eagerness, its idealism as yet unsullied by worldliness, though the world lies perilously near. The secret power of the Elizabethan age is revealed in the last line of Sidney's first sonnet. Trying by dainty device of literary art to celebrate his love after the fashion of "poor Petrarch's long deceasèd woes," a Power outside himself pulled him up short: —

"Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
'Fool!' said my muse to me, 'look in thy heart, and write.'"

He obeyed the Muse; and Elizabethan poetry followed. Sidney's lyrics, with all their quaintness, are the very first to give us in the full modern manner a direct revelation of the personal life of the heart.

Sidney's prose.

Sidney's critical work is a short essay, called "An Apologie for Poetrie." It was written about 1580, in answer to a stupid attack on poetry made by one Stephen Gosson. We are glad of the attack, for it called out this noble answer, which we may fairly claim as the first serious piece of English criticism. It is with the spirit of a knight that Sidney springs to the defence of his beloved art. He does not criticise nor analyze in cold blood; he chants a splendid pæan of praise. From his "Apologie," light seems to flash, annihilating time, on Shelley's beautiful "Defense of Poetry," and back again; the two great spirits, "passionate lovers," both "of that unseen and everlasting beautie to be seen by the eyes of the mind only cleared by faith," hailing each other across the centuries. It is true that Sidney makes sad blunders. He defends the classical Unities,—little foreseeing the magnificent art of Shakespeare; and it is strange to hear the contemporary of Spenser lamenting the absence of poetic inspiration in his day, and questioning "why England should bee grown so hard a step-mother to poets." But it was no more granted to Sidney than to another to foresee the future; and his own high passion for poetry, as for all that could help "to make the too much loved earth more lovely," is the best answer to his pessimism and the best earnest of what is to come.

Criticism. "An Apologie for Poetrie."

Sidney's "Arcadia" was a pastoral and heroic

Romance.

"The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," 1590.

romance, shaped on Spanish models, and written to please his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The book has all the redundance and extravagance of the Renaissance. It bewilders one because there is so much story, so lavish a style, such a confusion of exalted sentiments. Sidney has not yet mastered that supreme charm of the Pastoral, — simplicity, — the secret of which Shakespeare so exquisitely caught in "As You Like It." His "Arcadia," moreover, is much farther from life than is the Forest of Arden. Yet there are still those who like to wander in that country, to watch the series of sumptuous pictures reminding one of the great Venetian art which Sidney knew, to revel in the free and fearless union of sensuous beauty with perfect purity, and to feel, through all childishness of art, the impact of a lofty spirit upon our own.

Sidney's poetry.

"Astrophel and Stella," 1591.

But it is above all through his lyrical work that we recognize in Sidney a great soul and a true poet. We feel in his sonnets the warm flame of emotion, burning away all the light affectations and unrealities with which he could play as well as another. He first, in his "Astrophel and Stella," told the inner story of his heart in a series of sonnets and songs. It were sufficient glory for him that Shakespeare and Spenser, Rossetti and Mrs. Browning, have been among his followers. Sidney's was an unhappy story. We cannot follow it here. He tells it, in the main, excellently well. We see in these sonnets the man of action, the courteous and admired gentleman, the scholar, as well as the lover. If any one would like to picture the bright Elizabethan court, with its pleasure parties on the Thames, its

play tournaments, its polite gossip and graceful badinage, if any one would reconstruct the manners of the time, here let him look. But he will find better than this: a rare felicity in poetic phrasing; better again, the revelation of a great love and of a noble though tempted heart: —

"Soule's joy, bend not those morning stars from me,
Where Virtue is made strong by Beautie's might;
Where Love is chastness, Paine doth learn delight,
And Humbleness grows one with Majestie."

Such poetry should not be forgotten.

Sidney abjured his love at last. He cried, in piercing tones: —

"Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain Thy life in me."

Sidney as the hero of the 16th century.

This deep religious note completes our knowledge of his character. He was rightly the beloved of England, and it is not surprising that all the English poets wrote elegies upon him after his death. Sidney is the typical hero of the new age. We have had glimpses of the Hero from the dawn of history. At first, he embodied little save the primitive passion for fighting. As the centuries went on, he added many traits: a wider, less selfish aim in his battles; a code of honor; the service and the love of womanhood; a sincere religious feeling. But the old knights, noble as they were, lacked much that we demand from our heroes to-day. They fought

and loved and prayed, but they were ignorant and unthinking. Sidney is what they were, and more. The spirit of chivalry lives in him, undying. But he adds to the arts of war the graces of peace. He is a knight indeed: he is also a poet, a scholar, and a thinker, this hero of the Renaissance. In a word, he is the perfect gentleman.

REFERENCE BOOKS

The standard edition of Sidney is by ALEXANDER GROSART. A charming little volume of his lyrics is published by ERNEST RHYS in the series The Lyric Poets (Dent). The "Apologie for Poetrie" is in the Arber reprints; also in RHYS, Literary Pamphlets, Vol. I. A. D. POLLARD has edited "Astrophel and Stella." RUSKIN, in "Fors Clavigera," expresses delightfully his enthusiasm for Sidney, and his "Rock Honeycomb," Vol. II, of "Bibliotheca Pastorum," is an edition of Sidney's versified Psalms, with copious comments.

See also H. R. FOXBOURNE, Sir Philip Sidney (Heroes of the Nations Series); SYMONDS, Life of Sidney (English Men of Letters).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

"Astrophel and Stella" can be swiftly read, and one or two sonnets, including the sonnet on the "Highway" (84), and that on "Sleep" (39), can be learned by heart. Sidney's exquisite ear makes his verse a treasure-house for the study of verse forms. A class always enjoys making a study of Elizabethan court life from the picturesque material offered by the sonnets. The personality of the man is, however, what students should above all be made to feel. Some of the elegies written after his death, a number of which can be found in the Globe Spenser, may well be read, for the impression he made on his contemporaries.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL LITERATURE

I. Elizabethan Prose

ROMANCE, criticism, and lyrics, — these three, so delightfully represented in the brief achievement of Sidney, are, apart from the romantic epic, perhaps the most important phases of early Elizabethan literature.

There was a large output of prose at this time, but it need not detain us long, for it was subordinate to the poetry, though it has a quaint charm of its own. It has a great deal of interest, though, for literary students; for we see it slowly shaking off the tyranny of Latin style, and learning a harmony of its own. Even in the reign of Henry VIII, Roger Ascham had announced in the introduction of his book, the "Toxophilus," "I have written this English matter in the English tongue for English men"; yet this book, and his later work, the "Schoolmaster," read as if he were translating in his own mind from Latin into English. But the book which first stormed the affections of the Elizabethan court was of a very different order; this was the "Euphues, or the Anatomie of Wit," of John Lyly; it was published in 1579, the same year with the "Shepherd's Calendar," and was almost immediately followed by a second part, "Eu-

Roger Ascham, 1515–1568, "Toxophilus," 1544.

The "Schoolmaster," 1570.

John Lyly, 1553–1606.

"Euphues, or the Anatomie of Wit," 1579.

"Euphues and his England," 1580.

phues and his England." It enjoyed an immense vogue; traces of its influence may be found for thirty years afterward: its name has given a word, "euphuism," to our speech. But to us this story — for it is a kind of story — seems portentously dull. Its style is affected and self-conscious to a degree, — all made up of antitheses and far-fetched conceits. At the same time, the book has in substance a certain significance, for it is perhaps the first attempt in English at realistic fiction. The hero is neither a knight nor an outlaw; he is an ordinary young gentleman of good manners, to whom nothing happens more exciting than a trip to Italy and sundry flirtations. The quaint book is only a literary curiosity to-day. Perhaps some modern popular novels will seem just as queer, in two or three hundred years.

Other work in romance.

Many other stories were written in Elizabeth's time. Often they got lost, like the Euphues, in a maze of affectations, sometimes, as in Sidney's "Arcadia" or Lodge's "Rosalind," they reached, under Spanish or Italian guidance, a land of pure romance.

Lodge's "Rosalind," pub. 1590.

The "Rosalind," from which Shakespeare took the plot of "As You Like It," is one of the best of these books. These early novels have at times a good deal of charm, but they had not laid hold on reality, and so they could not live.

Critical prose flourished for a time quite vigorously. Sidney's "Apologie for Poetrie" is the most important book of prose of this kind. Webbe's "Discourse of English Poetrie" reads as if the author were interested in what he wrote, though he made some curious blunders. Puttenham's "Art of English

Poesie" is more like a formal rhetoric. These books are interesting because they illustrate a new literary type; but they have little real worth, and the critical impulse died away as creative power rose. Criticism cannot be great, as poetry can, at an early point of literary development. Critical prose.

There is other work on which it would be interesting to linger, if so many other greater things did not await us. The eager spirit of adventure that marks the time finds expression in much spirited prose, especially in the delightful series of Hakluyt's "Voyages." Again, this rich period poured forth a large number of books inspired by patriotism. Some dealt with history and legend, like that treasure-house of the dramatists, Holinshed's "Chronicle." Some celebrated the glories of a present England, like the Voyages of Drake, and Sir Walter Raleigh's "Last Fight of the Revenge," a magnificent piece of eloquence, on which Tennyson has based a stirring ballad. Patriotism was one of the strongest passions of the sixteenth century. It was so strong that it flowed over from prose to verse, and long poems were composed, like Daniel's "Civil Wars between Lancaster and York," or Drayton's "Polyolbion," dealing with the history of England or even with its geography. Miscellaneous prose.

The emotional life of the time ran more naturally into poetry than into prose. The best Elizabethan prose was that of reflection. In the last decade of the century the "Essays" of Francis Bacon and the "Ecclesiastical Polity" of Richard Hooker show that the young nation has begun to think. Hooker illustrates in prose, as we shall find Spenser illus- Prose of reflection.

Richard Hooker, 1553–1600.

trating in poetry, the characteristic English union of the forces of the Reformation and of the Renaissance. It is the first conscious intellectual expression of the Anglican Church; and Hooker's conception of the law of God, revealed to man through three great channels, the Bible, the Church, and human reason, has been an inspiration to philosophical religious thought ever since his day. His stately style, with its elaborate structure and musical cadences, is shaped on classical models; but it founded the first definite school of English prose, and its tradition continued till nearly the end of the seventeenth century. Bacon's incisive, epigrammatic style, though in itself very telling, founded no school. His amazing and brilliant essays represent the secular side of the life of the Renaissance. They embody in admirable form the immense advance made by the times in the understanding of character and society. There is no idealism in them and they cherish no illusions, though fully appreciating that illusions are useful. They express, often with startling sincerity of phrase, the most subtle wisdom of this world, which is an interesting and noteworthy thing, though it could not have written Shakespeare's plays.

Francis Bacon, 1561–1626.

II. Elizabethan Translations

During all this time the work of translation went merrily on. Even before 1579, Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Demosthenes, and other classic authors had been translated. In 1579, the year of the "Shepherd's Calendar" and "Euphues," appeared North's noble version of Plutarch. The Italian poets, Ariosto and

Tasso, were soon presented to Englishmen in the famous translations of Harrington and Fairfax; and in 1598 appeared the earlier part of the crowning achievement of Elizabethan translation, Chapman's great version of Homer. We see in Spenser and Shakespeare the result of this impact of foreign and classical genius upon the English mind. It is noteworthy that all the important influences of the time, whether ancient or modern, set from the Latin races; from Rome, Spain, France. Almost it seems as if, despite the Norman Conquest, the native force of the Teutonic stock was in constant danger of overpowering other elements in the English race, unless a frequent play of fertilizing forces from other directions were brought to bear on it.

We must not think that the ideal of translation in the Renaissance was what it is to-day. Chapman's Homer, for instance, is a great Elizabethan poem on the basis of the Greek poet; it is not a literal rendering of Homer, although Chapman wished to make it so. In the middle ages, people treated the classic authors exactly as they pleased, altering them at their pleasure. In the Renaissance, they had learned more respect, and they really translated their great predecessors, but they were quite incapable of giving the actual effect of the original. They looked at antiquity through colored Renaissance glasses, and it never occurred to them to take these glasses off.

III. Elizabethan Lyrics

We turn now to linger a little, with rejoicing hearts, in the Elizabethan garden of song. It is a

garden, not a woodland. These lovely sixteenth-century lyrics, inevitable and careless as they seem, have not the wilding charm of ballad or folk-song. Theirs is no "unpremeditated art"; they are the product of culture, though culture would avail little if they were not rooted in the warm earth of human experience, and nourished by the free, potent sunshine of imagination. They are artificial with that best kind of art which becomes part of the life of nature: —

> "For nature is made better by no mean
> But nature makes that mean,"

as Shakespeare says.

Early experiments in classic metres.

Many of the earlier lyrics of the period show in a curious way this tentative, conscious, experimental character. What, the poets asked themselves, was the right way of writing English verse? Should they copy the quantitative, unrhymed movement of the classics? Yes! answered for a time some of the best critics, including for a brief moment Spenser himself. Strange and absurd though this answer appear to us, we cannot wonder that it was given then. For the perfect dignity, beauty, and finish of classic metres fell fresh on people's ears, and of English models they had few or none. So they set to work to concoct hexameters, sapphics, what you will, and extraordinary work they made of it. But the lovely, new-born muse of English song laughed at their pedantry; and her laughter echoed in their ears and rippled through their veins like music, and in spite of themselves these would-be learned poets began to sing. Soon they became intoxicated —

and no wonder — with their own words. They did not approve of rhyme, but rhyme they did, with delicate ease and abundance. They wanted to write serious quantitative verse, and melodies infinite in variety and charm rose unbidden to their lips. They made a virtue of necessity, yielded themselves to the spell, and added a fine artistic sense to the impulse of nature. Conscious experiment melted, almost at once, into spontaneous inspiration.

What caused the whole nation to break forth suddenly into music? Who can tell? The more we study, the more old song-books and miscellanies yield up their treasures, the more amazed we grow at the singing quality that was in the Elizabethan air. Numerous anthologies published during this period attest the strength of the lyrical impulse. First of these was "Tottel's Miscellany," which came out as early as 1557. It contained much work of Surrey and Wyatt and of other lyrists as well; and though some of it seems rough to our finer ears, the little book gave strong impetus to the lyrical movement. The very names of many of the other anthologies of the time are redolent of beauty and sweetness: "The Paradise of Dainty Devices," "A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions," "Britton's Bower of Delights," "The Phoenix's Nest," "The Passionate Pilgrim," "England's Helicon," "Davison's Poetical Rhapsody." Anthologies.

The blending of artifice with nature is especially evidenced by the pastoral spirit, popular in the early Elizabethan lyrics, as in the romances and the drama. We do not write pastorals any longer; perhaps we shall never write them again. All the more reason Pastorals.

why we should return now and then and rejoice to roam through this singing world of exquisite breeding without formality, where we may enjoy the fruits of civilization without its pains. Of course, many of the lyrics are not pastoral, but nearly all of them express in somewhat a like manner pure ecstasy of joyous grace. They sing of love, of springtime, of blossom, they voice the rapturous praise of beauty and again return to their refrain, youth and love, love and youth. All moods of delicate courtship are in them, — gay, tender, plaintive, frolicsome, — only the depths of passion they seldom or never sound.

Themes of the lyrics.

This lyrical revel goes on unchecked into the age of King James. In the midst of it, before long, a more serious note is heard, and lyrics of a different character begin to appear. All this development is so marvellously rapid that to mark stages in it is dangerous if not impossible; yet we shall be safe in saying that in the decade between 1590 and 1600, there appears a tendency to sincerer, graver, self-revelation, and at the same time to lyrical forms a little less ebullient in rapture, a little quieter and more elaborated. This is *par excellence* the decade of the sonnet, and of all lyrical forms practised by the Elizabethans the sonnet is that which has retained the most enduring place in English literature.

Sonnets.

Sidney's "Astrophel and Stella," though written earlier, was not published till 1591; and the following decade saw the writing of Spenser's "Amoretti," and of some at least of those final glories of the Elizabethan lyric, — the sonnets of Shakespeare. Lesser poets of distinction — Constable, Drayton, Daniel — joined the ranks of sonneteers, and sonnet-sequences

became the order of the day. So powerful was the poetic instinct abroad in the world that often a man of temperament naturally rather dry and ordinary would produce perhaps one sonnet of enduring beauty, like the little poem of Drayton, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part." But the best sequences, as wholes, are of course by the great men, Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare.

These three sets — Sidney's "Astrophel and Stella," Spenser's "Amoretti," and the sonnets of Shakespeare — well illustrate not only the possible range of sonnet expression, but also various types in form which the sonnet may assume.

Structure of the sonnet.

A sonnet has fourteen lines. This length, arbitrary as it seems, appears to have a certain psychological correspondence with the length of time during which the mind finds exclusive absorption in one feeling, or mood, possible. Sidney's sonnets follow in the main Italian usage. This divides the sonnet into two parts with a slight break in the middle: the first eight lines, called the octave, and the second six lines, called the sestet. The octave has only two rhymes. They run *abbaabba*, so that the first end-word rhymes with the last. There may be either two or three rhymes in the sestet, arranged with more freedom; only, in the strictest form of Italian sonnet, the final couplet is not used. The reason for this is that the emotion is diffused through the whole sonnet like a heaving wave on the surface of the ocean, rising to greatest height in the middle, and subsiding at the close into quietude. Spenser wrote some Italian sonnets, but more often he illustrated the passion of his day for experiment in verse-

forms, for he evolved a type of his own, of which the rhymes run *ababbcbccdcdee*. This, in his use, is often very lovely, but it has seemingly not commended itself, for it has not been used by later poets. The Shakespearean sonnet, on the other hand, holds in our language a place side by side with the Italian, equally honored. Shakespeare did not invent it, but he glorified it. It consists of three quatrains run on three sets of rhyme, and a final couplet; and in this form we have still a wavelike movement, only it is no longer the movement of a billow that surges upward, and then draws home again silently into the boundless deep, but of a breaker that crashes with overwhelming force and impetus of feeling upon the shore. These types still endure; and sonnets, from Elizabeth's day to our own, have remained the most beloved form of lyrical expression in England.

Further and interesting developments awaited the lyric of the Renaissance. We shall discuss them later. For the present, we leave the lyric here in mid-career, and turn to the man to whom belongs, even more than to Sidney, the representative place among early Elizabethan poets: Edmund Spenser.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Euphues, Ascham's Works, Raleigh's Last Fight of the Revenge are in the Arber reprints. A first edition of HAKLUYT'S Voyages (1589) is in the Boston Public Library. Voyages of the Elizabethan Seamen to America (selections from Hakluyt), Clarendon Press.

The chief editor and critical authority for *Bacon* is JAMES SPEDDING. Excellent Life, by DEAN CHURCH, in English Men of Letters. Essays, in Golden Treasury Series. See article in National Dictionary of Biography, and Introduction to

Clarendon Press edition of "Essays." MACAULAY'S Essay is a classic in its way.

Chief editor and critical authority on *Hooker*, JOHN KEBLE. See Introduction to Clarendon Press edition of "Ecclesiastical Polity," Bk. I, by DEAN CHURCH. IZAAK WALTON'S charming Life should be read.

Elizabethan Criticism. See, for good discussion of the development of criticism, Introduction, by C. E. VAUGHAN, to the volume "English Literary Criticism" in the Warwick Library.

Elizabethan Translation. See the Tudor Translations, ed. by W. F. HENLEY. Excellent Introduction to NORTH'S "Plutarch," by G. WYNDHAM. CHAPMAN'S noble "Homer" can be obtained cheaply in MORLEY'S Universal Library. His "Iliad," modernized, is found in the "Knickerbocker Nuggets" Series.

Elizabethan Lyrics. These have of late been made generally accessible in various attractive collections. See A. H. BULLEN'S reprints of "Davison's Poetical Rhapsody" and "England's Helicon"; also his collections of Lyrics from Elizabethan Song Books (two series or one condensed volume); Lyrics from Elizabethan Dramatists, Lyrics from Elizabethan Romances. FELIX SCHELLING'S Elizabethan Lyrics, in the Athenæum Press Series, is, with its admirable Introduction, the best collection for students to own. A charming little edition of "Campion" is in the series The Lyric Poets (Dent). CARPENTER, English Lyric Poetry (1500–1700), Warwick Library. Pastorals, in Warwick Library. Tottel's Miscellany, in Arber reprints.

For minor sonnet-cycles, Drayton, Daniel, Constable, see edition by MARTHA FOOTE CROWE. For criticisms on the sonnet, see T. WATTS, article in Encyclopædia Britannica; J. ASHCROFT NOBLE, The Sonnet in England; WILLIAM SHARP, Introduction to Sonnets in the Canterbury Poets; HALL CAINE, Sonnets of Three Centuries. See, for study of verse forms, GUMMERE'S Poetics.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The material treated in this chapter would give scope for the study of years. Free, rapid, copious reading of as much of this noble literature as may be found possible is more important than close analytical work for the young student. Selected lives from North's "Plutarch," Raleigh's magnificent account of the "Fight of the Revenge" (in connection with which Tennyson's Ballad may be learned by heart), readings

from Hakluyt and Harrison, are quite as thrilling reading as Henty for young people, and far more profitable. Lyrics should be freely learned by heart and recited in class. The element of drill may be supplied by close study of verse-forms, and this is the point where the different feet, metres, stanzas, etc., most familiar in English poetry may best be discussed. The sonnet in particular should be well understood, and examples of the Italian and the English sonnet read or repeated in class. Sonnets on the sonnet are especially charming to learn: Wordsworth, "Scorn not the sonnet"; Theodore Watts, "Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach"; D. G. Rossetti, "A sonnet is a moment's monument"; R. W. Gilder, "What is a sonnet? 'tis the pearly shell." J. R. Lowell (Letters, II, 36), "You order me, dear Jane, to write a sonnet."

A topical discussion of the lyrics is attractive. Nature in the lyrics, love, classical influences, patriotism, all that constitutes the fascination of this gay literature, may be brought home to the imagination by instances found by each student for himself.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

What England meant to Spenser and Sidney; Early Experiments in the Art of writing Verses (a study of the experiments in classical metres, and the abandonment of them); Homer, as Elizabeth's Day saw him (a lecture on Chapman); Italian Influences in Elizabethan Lyric and Romance; Spanish Influences in Elizabethan Lyric and Romance; How the Elizabethans treated the Classics; Pageantry in the England of Elizabeth; Pastorals, from Greece to England. These can all be studied and prepared in the references given.

CHAPTER VI

EDMUND SPENSER

SPENSER wrote what Sidney lived. Just as Chaucer's poetry expressed, with charming ease and transforming grace, the imaginative life of the middle ages, so the poetry of Spenser gathers into itself the imaginative life of the Renaissance, and flashes it forth to us in myriad forms and hues of beauty.

Poetry, to Spenser, was no mere accomplishment, no interlude in an active career, as it was to Wyatt and Surrey and Sidney; it was the serious pursuit of his life. This is a significant fact; it is one of the first indications of the development of a profession of letters. Not that Spenser expected to support himself with his pen; the dawn of that idea was far away. He had an active career apart from literature; but poet he was, first and foremost, throughout his life.

I. Spenser's Life

Spenser was born in London in the year 1552. He was almost an exact contemporary of Raleigh, Sidney, and Hooker; he was twelve years older than Shakespeare. His University was Cambridge, and there he surely formed connections which led him straight into all the eager questioning and critical inquiry that marked the early portion of the queen's reign. Also, 1552–1599.

at the University he heard a great deal of vigorous preaching, and echoes of the theological controversies of the day are in his early work.

This work began soon after he left Cambridge; he was living in the north of England at the time, and was enamoured of a fair country lass, his Rosalind, who spurned his suit. His love, his sorrow, his enthusiasm for the queen, his interest in the religious parties of his day, his facility in literary experiments, and his sensitiveness to the æsthetic influences that were abroad, were all illustrated in his first poem, "The Shepherd's Calendar," published when he was twenty-seven years old. The poem is a series of pastoral eclogues. They are a little affected, a little self-conscious, like the most early Elizabethan work, but they show a lyrical grace and an ear for music such as no other writer then in England, except possibly Sidney, possessed. The poem was dedicated to Sidney, and Spenser was at one time under the patronage of Sidney's uncle, the famous Earl of Leicester. He lived with the choicest and noblest spirits of that great age; so much we could guess from his poems, though we had no external evidence.

"The Shepherd's Calendar," 1579.

Nevertheless, a large part of his life was passed in exile; for in 1580 we find that he went to Ireland, where, in one capacity or another, he remained till just before his death in 1599. He was secretary to one of the sternest statesmen of Elizabeth's reign, — Arthur, Lord Grey, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whom he celebrated in his "Faerie Queene" as Arthegall, the knight of Justice. His business as secretary was faithfully performed, and we have a prose treatise from him, "A View of the State of

Ireland," which shows admirable political insight. Ireland was a dreary country, and that Spenser keenly felt his enforced absence from the rich and brilliant life of England is pretty clear. Yet perhaps he dreamed all the better for his solitude. Once at least that solitude was broken, when in 1590 he received a visit from one of the most striking men of the day, — Sir Walter Raleigh, — and, persuaded by Raleigh, returned to England for a brief time, bringing with him the first three books of the "Faerie Queene." His charming poem, "Colin Clout's Come Home again," tells us something about this journey, and about his gracious reception at court.

Minor poems, 1591.

In 1591 Spenser published a collection of short poems, of which the most important are a playful allegorical fantasy about a butterfly, called "Muiopotmos," and a delightfully colloquial poem called "Mother Hubbard's Tale," which shows that our gentle poet could be satirical when he liked, and that the seamy side of court life was not concealed from him. He must have enjoyed his Irish life better as time went on: for he forgot at last the cold Rosalind of his youth, and when he was over forty wooed and won a fair Irish girl named Elizabeth. It was in June, 1594, that he married her. We are very glad of his love, and its happy ending; for it has given us some of the sweetest love-poetry in the language, the "Amoretti," and that noble marriage hymn, the "Epithalamium." This great ode, with its perfect purity of passion and the interwoven sweetness of its harmonies, marks the highest level of the Elizabethan lyric.

"Amoretti," "Epithalamium," 1595.

The brief remainder of Spenser's life must have been happy. Two sons were born to him. In 1595 he published the second three books of the "Faerie Queene," and he was now known as the leading poet of England. In 1596 he published "Four Hymns in Honour of Love and Beautie." Two of these had been written earlier; the others were now added. All breathe a spirit of ecstatic rejoicing in beauty, natural and divine. The "Prothalamium," another wedding ode written in honor of two noble ladies in this same year, is the last poem of his that we have. For his happiness was not to last. In September, 1597, the half-savage Irish attacked Spenser's house, and burned it to the ground; Ben Jonson says that a baby child of the poet's perished in the flames. Spenser escaped to London; and there, some say in extreme poverty, assuredly in a state of shocked distress over the terrible scenes he had witnessed, the poet of the "Faerie Queene" died in the month of January, 1599. The end of his life was like a dreary adventure from his own great poem. Some say that the last six books of the poem had been written, and were burned in the fire; but this is not likely. His work and his life were left incomplete; he was only forty-six years old.

Spenser's character.

We learn far more than mere outward facts about Spenser from his poetry; for he was one of the men who reveal themselves, not like Shakespeare one of the men who conceal themselves, in their work. These minor poems alone tell us much about his temperament, his tastes, his convictions. They show us clearly that he was a gentleman and aristocrat and a man of culture; they show that he had lived

near great affairs, though if we are shrewd we shall suspect that he was rather the observer than the actor. There can be no question, however, that the man was a devoted and pure-hearted lover, filled with the chivalrous spirit of worshipful devotion to women, exquisitely sensitive to beauty, a man of pure soul and deeply religious temper. He was an idealist and a dreamer; and finally, the "Epithalamium" and some cadences in the "Shepherd's Calendar" would suffice to tell us that in all that wonderful generation there was no other ear so sensitive to hear and catch a magical music that seems borne from the land of dreams.

This was the man who wrote the great romantic epic of England, the "Faerie Queene."

II. The "Faerie Queene"

The object of the "Faerie Queene" was, as Spenser himself tells us in his introductory letter to Raleigh, "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." He who had known Sidney was well competent to this great task. The poem was to have been in twelve books, but as only six were written, the framework is incomplete. We know, however, that one figure was to have dominated the whole; that is, the figure of Prince Arthur. It is our old friend, King Arthur of the Table Round, but quite differently conceived, for Spenser invents a wholly new legend to suit the new age. His Arthur, like Shelley's hero in his "Alastor," has while yet a youth been visited in sleep by a woman exquisitely fair. Waking into a barren and lonely world, he

General scheme of the poem.

has vowed never to rest till he has found and won this lady of his dreams. She is a true lady, no mere shadow of the night; her name is Gloriana, and she is the Faerie Queene from whom the poem is named. All through its bewildering sequences Arthur goes seeking her. Again and again, we catch glimpses of his radiant, wistful figure flashing by, clad in golden armor, with shield of diamond, and rainbow plumes nodding on the helmet crowned with "the dragon of the great pendragonship," as Tennyson puts it. Gloriana holds her court afar. Arthur often meets and helps her knights at some point of desperate need, but the Faerie Queene herself, within the compass of the books that have come down to us, he never finds.

It is a wondrous country through which Prince Arthur wanders; an enchanted land indeed, where mysterious perils beset on every hand the knights of Faerie. Yet as we read on, through all the glamour of the magic, there seems to gleam on us a world strangely familiar. The "Faerie Queene" is an allegory; fairy-land is England in disguise; further than this, it is the spiritual world of human experience. Sometimes the allegory is historical, and Gloriana stands for Queen Elizabeth, while Prince Arthur's features are those of Spenser's great patron, the Earl of Leicester; more often it is moral and spiritual, and Gloriana represents the ideal of spiritual glory which noble manhood has seen in a vision, and must forever seek through the wide and mysterious world. Thus conceived, the allegory is true to Spenser's deepest thought; with his master Plato he firmly believed that there existed a spiritual

ideal, no mere delusion of the human mind, but an eternal reality. The soul of man, which has beheld this ideal, but beheld it in vision alone, is on earth a wanderer, ever pursuing a quest forever unfulfilled. It is by an accident that the poem is incomplete, but an accident hardly to be regretted; for there is truth in the incompleteness, which leaves the soul a pilgrim still, as does the earlier poem of Langland.

Arthur, although the hero of the poem, is seen but seldom. The different books record the adventures of different knights of Gloriana, who represent the different virtues of which Arthur, — Magnificence, — represents the sum. They form a fellowship akin to the Table Round, these knights of Faerie, or, as we may call them, the knights of the ideal. Their home is the court of the Faerie Queene; thence they sally forth, as good knights should, as Raleigh and Drake and Sidney and other great men of the day went forth from the court of Elizabeth, to subdue the enemies of their great queen, to aid the helpless, and to establish the reign of purity, honor, and truth.

It is not necessary to care for Spenser's allegory in order to enjoy the poem; indeed, some of the best critics encourage us to disregard the allegory, and simply to revel in the beautiful pictures presented and the delightful stories told. "The best use of the 'Faerie Queene,'" says Lowell, "is as a gallery of pictures." At the same time, though it is better not to puzzle over the allegory, at least for the first reading, the power and beauty of the poem rise and fall with the depth of the spiritual meaning, and when this meaning grows thin or vanishes, as sometimes happens, the poetry is likely to cloy.

Summary of the poem. Book I.

The first book is the most famous. It tells the story of St. George the Red-Cross knight, and of the Lady Una. This is a lovely story, one of the loveliest in the whole world. St. George in the allegory is the knight of Holiness: Una is Truth, as her name implies. There is an ecclesiastical allegory, too, and an historical, for whoever cares to follow them. We may think of Una as the pure reformed Church, and Duessa as the Roman Catholic communion if we will: or, Duessa may mean to us Mary Queen of Scots.

Book II.

The second book deals with the ethical virtue, the virtue of the natural man, Temperance. Temperance means a more positive thing in Spenser and the Renaissance, than it usually means with us: it is far more than mere negative abstinence, it is that noble power of self-mastery without asceticism which antiquity so prized, and which was just reawakening the enthusiasm of the world. Spenser names its champion Sir Guyon. His enemies are excess, in every form of violence or worldliness or wicked beauty. The second book does not tell so complete or thrilling a story as the first, but it is full of fine pictures, and of splendid contrasts of light and shade.

Books III and IV.

The third and fourth books tell, in more discursive though charming fashion, the stories of the two knights of Friendship, and of Britomart, the virgin knight of Chastity. It is significant that Spenser's representative of chastity should be no cloistered hermit, but a maiden knight, who with a burning love in her heart seeks over the world the man who shall be her husband. The days of asceticism are over: and the Renaissance has no more charming

story to tell than that of Britomart, her friend Amoret, and her lover, the brave Arthegall.

Book V. Arthegall is the knight of Justice, and his adventures occupy the fifth book. It is a very stern book, for Spenser shared the political sternness of his age. One often feels in the "Faerie Queene" how he shrank from the savage life of Ireland, and contrasted it with the magnificent order and tranquillity where Elizabeth made her sway prevail. The admiration for the queen expressed by all the poets of that time seems fulsome and absurd to us sometimes, but we must remember against what background they saw her court and her person. Spenser believed in keeping order with a strong arm, and his stalwart Arthegall is a noble and vigorous figure.

Book VI. In striking contrast to the fifth book is the exquisite grace and charm of the sixth, which narrates the adventures of the young Sir Calidore, the knight of Courtesy, and of his love, the fair shepherdess, Pastorella. It is characteristic of that courtly age that Courtesy should have an important rôle among the virtues, and there is a sweet playfulness in this book which serves as real relief after the moral strenuousness of much that has preceded.

Sir Calidore is the last of the knights of Faerie. They form a splendid, shining group, clearly differentiated, as was seldom the case with the knights in the old romances. Beside them is a group of women, — Una, Belphœbe, Amoret, Britomart, Florimel, Pastorella, — and these women are Spenser's sweetest creation. His attitude toward them blends something of the mystic reverence of chivalry with the æsthetic feeling of the Renaissance, while he seems

at times to suggest in their stories a little of that tender purity of domestic life, that romantic devotion not only in courtship but in marriage, which belongs more distinctively to the modern world.

Character of the poem.

The first impression of the "Faerie Queene" is one of dazzling, almost confused beauty. In sensuous equipment no poet was ever richer than Spenser, and it is hard to tell whether one is more affected by the appeal to the eye or to the ear, by his harmonies or his pictures.

The stanza.

The poem is written in a perfect stanza, which was Spenser's own invention, and is one of the noblest gifts that English literature has ever received. Its beauty and expressive power have been proved, if proof were needed, in the use made of it by later poets, Byron, Keats, Shelley, to say nothing of the Spenserian imitators of the eighteenth century. It is a long stanza of eight pentameter iambic lines followed by an Alexandrine at the end, bound together in an intimate unity by the rhyme-scheme: *ababbcbcc*. It is probably the longest stanza possible compatible with swiftness of narration. It lends itself marvellously to descriptions, whether of beauty or of gloom; and in Spenser's hands it is unrivalled in melodious variety, dignity, and sweetness.

Spenser's nature was responsive and receptive before it was original; and his poem reflects every influence that was playing upon its age.

The relation of the poem to age.

In the first place, the bright afterglow of the middle ages is in it. Nowhere, not even in the Morte d'Arthur do we find so unstained and complete an image of what chivalry would fain have been, of the perfect ideal of knighthood. Some critics have

thought that the past was dearer to him than the present: He loved obsolete words, and phrases with the flavor of the past. "That world which as it receded, kissed hands to him alone, had for him more charm than the world that proffered her ungarnered spoils to the new settlers," said Aubrey de Vere. Certainly, the whole framework of the poem is taken from mediæval romance; and not only the framework but much of the spirit. Or rather, let us say that Chivalry has risen again in the poem of Spenser, — and risen in the body of the Resurrection. Mediæval influence.

Yet Aubrey de Vere is mistaken if he means that Spenser was indifferent to his own day and its interests. Hearsay of "fruitfullest Virginia" quickened his power to imagine fairy-land: and no genius of the Renaissance was more enriched than his by the recovery of classic literature. The influences of this literature, especially of Virgil, are patent in the "Faerie Queene." They do not affect the framework, but they determine the ornament; and there are little myths of Spenser's own, like the charming story of the birth of Belphœbe and Amoret, which show how he had caught the fashion of the later classical writers. Classic and contemporary influence.

The third great influence, to be found in the "Faerie Queene," beside that of the middle ages and the classics, is that of Italy. There first the Romantic Epic was perfected, in the work, not long preceding Spenser, of Ariosto and Tasso. This epic was in a way a development from the mediæval romance, but it was more self-conscious and literary. The influence of both these poets, especially of Tasso, the graver and more sentimental of the two, Italian influence.

is all-pervasive alike in the scheme and detail of the "Faerie Queene." The rich coloring of Italy is in the poem..

All these different influences blend in Spenser's works as they blended in the Renaissance. Sometimes the result is amusing, as when Parnassus is jumbled up with the Mount of Olives, or an angel is seriously compared to "Cupido on Idæan Hill." Yet one feels no incongruity in the poem. One yields, enchanted, to the very lavishness and opulence of beauty, to the wealth of exquisite pictures presented to the inner eye.

Of course, in one way this very lavishness is a fault. The poem seems to many people diffuse, and there is no denying that Spenser gets entangled sometimes in his own manifold inventions. But, all admissions made, we can only be grateful for this wondrous work of art.

Spenser's ethics.

Best of all, this seemingly unrestrained luxuriance of delights may be enjoyed without qualm or scruple of conscience. Often the beauty of this visible world has inspired good men with terror. It terrified the monk who was before Spenser's day, and the Puritan who was to come after. In a way, monk and Puritan are right. That the world of sense is fraught with danger to the spirit no one can study the development of the drama in the century which followed Spenser and deny. Spenser knows this well. He can show us the seductive loveliness behind which lurks temptation; life must be militant, he tells us; his knights are ever on their guard, and fairy-land is one great battle-field. Yet his imagination, pure and healthful as it is sensitive, revels in

the beauty of this visible universe, the beauty of nature, art, and humanity, unchecked by fear. This he can permit, because, filled with love of this earth, he is filled with love of heaven too, and visible beauty is to him a symbol or a sacrament of an unseen beauty beyond. The "Faerie Queene," with all its classic adornments, is profoundly Christian; Spenser is a son of the Reformation as well as of the Renaissance. Perhaps this happy union could not long endure. On the one hand, the Jacobean drama was to follow, with its sad revel of the senses; on the other, the harsh literature of Puritanism. But we may at least rejoice that, before this parting of the ways, we possess one great poem which knows the actual world, yet glorifies it, and in which a passionate love of a visible and of an invisible loveliness meet for once without strife, in serene harmony.

REFERENCE BOOKS

The standard edition of Spenser is by ALEXANDER GROSART. Clarendon Press edition of first two books of the "Faerie Queene." Edition of same books by PERCEVAL, with notes of character more literary, less linguistic, than the Clarendon Press. Globe edition, complete works. The "Shepherd's Calendar," introduced and edited by C. H. HERFORD. Life of Spenser, DEAN CHURCH, English Men of Letters. Illuminating essays on Spenser will be found in AUBREY DE VERE'S Essays, chiefly on Poetry; in EDWARD DOWDEN'S Transcripts and Studies; and in LOWELL'S Among my Books.

The "Shepherd's Calendar" and the "Faerie Queene" have been illustrated in a delightful way by Walter Crane.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

A student loses what can never be had again who fails to read while young at least the first two books of the "Faerie Queene." In class adopt Lowell's recommendation, and treat

the poem as a gallery of pictures. Let each student show the class one figure piece, one landscape, one composition, one bit of pageantry. If any members of the class have travelled, and know the Italian art of the Renaissance, it is fascinating to ascribe different scenes in Spenser to different artists, as the description of Belphœbe to Botticelli, of Charissa to Titian, of Mammon to Rembrandt or Tintoretto. The student who has learned to visualize his Spenser has learned to love him. Study next Spenser's appeal to the ear: the melody of the poem, the Spenserian stanza; analyze; watch treatment in other hands — Thomson, Byron, Shelley, Keats; study the use of alliteration, of tone color, the pause melody in its variations, the scope and the limitations of the stanza.

After the appeal to the eye and the ear, take the appeal to the imagination. Follow the conduct of the narrative, the various impersonations, etc. Finally, consider the appeal to the spiritual sense, study the allegory, and note the noble ethical passages.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Spenser's Debt to Tasso and Ariosto; Spenser's Debt to the Middle Ages; Spenser's Debt to the Classics; Reflection of Contemporary English Life in the "Faerie Queene"; The Influence on the Poem of Spenser's Irish Life; Spenser's Ideal of Heroism; The Later Books of the "Faerie Queene" (a lecture on each, if possible, presenting a summary of story and spiritual conception); Spenser the Aristocrat; The Symbolism of Spenser.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY DRAMA

I. Development

WE left the drama still in the form of miracle plays, a servant of the Church, though sometimes rather a boisterous servant. We find it again, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and it has become thoroughly secular. How did this happen?

It happened essentially because the temper of the nation was changed. But we can find links between the religious drama of the middle ages and the secular drama of the Renaissance. Such links are furnished by the Moralities and Interludes, which flourished from the reign of Henry VI on into Elizabeth's reign. The Moralities were dramatized allegories; they brought such characters as Mankind, Folly, Mercy, Perseverance, upon the stage. They were often dull, but they trained invention in a certain way, for they forced their writers to make up a story instead of simply adapting the stories of the Bible as the miracle plays had done. The Interlude had less plot than the Morality, but in the hands of John Heywood, who wrote for the court of Henry VII between 1520 and 1540, the characters were drawn from real life and were sometimes very amusing, and the dialogue was vivacious. The most familiar of Heywood's interludes is one called "The

Moralities.

Interludes.

Four P's," in which a Pardoner, a Palmer, a Pedler, and a Potecary try in an entertaining manner who can tell the biggest lie.

Love of pageantry.

Moralities and Interludes formed a sort of intellectual prelude to the drama. Meanwhile, the impassioned liking for pageantry and representation which possessed the country in its young prosperity prepared the way on another side. Never was the splendor of visible beauty more eagerly craved and realized by the imagination. We may see the result of this impulse in such ceremonies as marked the queen's reception at Kenilworth, or in the numerous lord mayor's shows. But there is little use in dwelling on these things. It is evident that the drama had to come; the force and feeling of the nation at large had to press outward and reproduce themselves, through an art form more free, more sensitively varied, more rich, than any that had heretofore been known. Even before 1590, even before the drama rose to overmastering glory in Shakespeare, there was already a lusty dramatic development which gave promise of nearly all the phases of dramatic expression that were to follow.

II. Types

Chronicle plays.

1. The new patriotism, for instance, expressed itself in a series of chronicle plays that put roughly but vividly before the people the course of English history. These plays were epic rather than dramatic in character; they had not much plot or structure; they were simply a visible presentation of great personages and great events. The English historical

plays of Shakespeare — several of which are written in collaboration with other authors — take up and continue this tradition.

Comedies.

2. Comedy of a rude and homely type appears even before the time of Elizabeth. "Ralph Roister Doister," the first English comedy, was written by Nicholas Udall, probably about 1550. It reflects a curious blending of influences from the New Learning, and from native English life. The plot and the types of character are derived from Latin comedy, but the effervescent fun, the vigorous dialogue, and the setting are full English. "Gammer Gurton's Needle" is another interesting early comedy. Its rollicking humor and vulgar realism present us with a capital picture of scenes of village life.

"Ralph Roister Doister," printed 1566.

"Gammer Gurton's Needle."

Tragedies.

3. Tragedy soon begins to feel its dark way. Sometimes it is stately and frigid, modelled after the Latin dramas of Seneca, consisting rather of declamation than of action. This is the type of "Gorboduc," the first tragedy in our tongue, written in part by Sackville, a poet whose introduction to the collection of poems called the "Mirror for Magistrates" is perhaps the best poetry produced during the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign. Again, breaking loose from all restraint of canons of art or taste or propriety, the drama raised a cry of almost incoherent horror, as in the so-called "Tragedy of Blood," of which Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy" is the best instance. Shakespeare's supreme tragedies owe much to the tragedy that has gone before. They turn horror itself into beauty, and leave the spirit purified, though aghast; yet "Hamlet" is but a tragedy of blood transformed.

"Gorboduc," acted in 1562 before the queen.

Court plays.

4. Almost all these dramatic forms belonged to the people, and were presented to the great Elizabethan public at large. But the court had a special drama of its own. Elizabeth dearly loved a play; fifty-two plays were acted at court between 1568 and 1570, and the Children of the Queen's Chapel, young boy choristers, were organized into a regular company of players who acted not only before her Majesty, but elsewhere. These court dramas are, so far as they have come down to us, much what their name implies. They have much literary delicacy; often, as in Peele's charming "Arraignment of Paris," they partake more of the character of a masque than of serious drama. The prettiest that we have — and very pretty some of them are — are written in prose by Lyly, the author of "Euphues." Shakespeare owes much to these, as to all the other dramatic types that preceded him. Some of his favorite motifs are found in Lyly; Benedick and Beatrice, Rosalind and Celia, would talk with less grace and sparkle had not Lyly shown the possibilities of charm in what we may call the drama of good society.

Verse forms.

As to verse forms, the drama during this period was trying all kinds of experiments; it was written sometimes in fourteen syllable lines, like interminable ballads, sometimes in doggerel, and again sometimes in the ten-syllable, unrhymed verse, which was finally, by a process of natural selection, to prevail in dramatic work.

III. The Predecessors of Shakespeare

The University wits.

The names of some of the chief dramatists who preceded Shakespeare were Peele, Greene, Lodge,

Kyd, Nash, and Marlowe. Interesting men they all were, though here we can only suggest them by a string of names. They were University men, masters of arts, and gentlemen; but they flung away, most of them, from decorum and law of all kinds, lived a wild Bohemian life in the vivid London of the Renaissance, and in several instances died in misery or even crime while they were still young. Their work is confused, uneven, and tentative, but strange gleams of genius shine through it. We understand, as we learn of them, how the profession of playwright and actor was in evil repute, and already stigmatized by the grave Puritan spirit which was rising in England.

Christopher Marlowe, 1564–1593.

The greatest of all these men, the only one possessed of a high genius, was Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe was one of those poets snatched away when they have given the world only preludings of their music, for he was killed in a tavern when twenty-nine years old. He was just the age of Shakespeare, and it is not irreverent to say that Shakespeare at twenty-nine had not achieved so much. For Marlowe had a great, a soaring spirit, and he could express it in what Ben Jonson rightly called a "mighty line." The noblest blank verse before Shakespeare is his. He left us a few poems, and five tragedies, all written within six years: "Tamburlaine," "Dr. Faustus," "The Massacre at Paris," "The Jew of Malta," and "Edward II." These dramas are, with the exception of "Edward II," crude and formless; they break into the bombastic or the grotesque in a surprising, disappointing manner, yet they leave one out of breath from the

sense of power they convey, and the yearning they suggest for an unattainable beauty and knowledge. For Marlowe's was a soul: —

> "Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always roving as the restless spheres." [1]

His drama is one of marvellous promise, not yet of fulfilment. The age that could produce a Marlowe needed a Shakespeare, and Shakespeare came.

REFERENCE BOOKS

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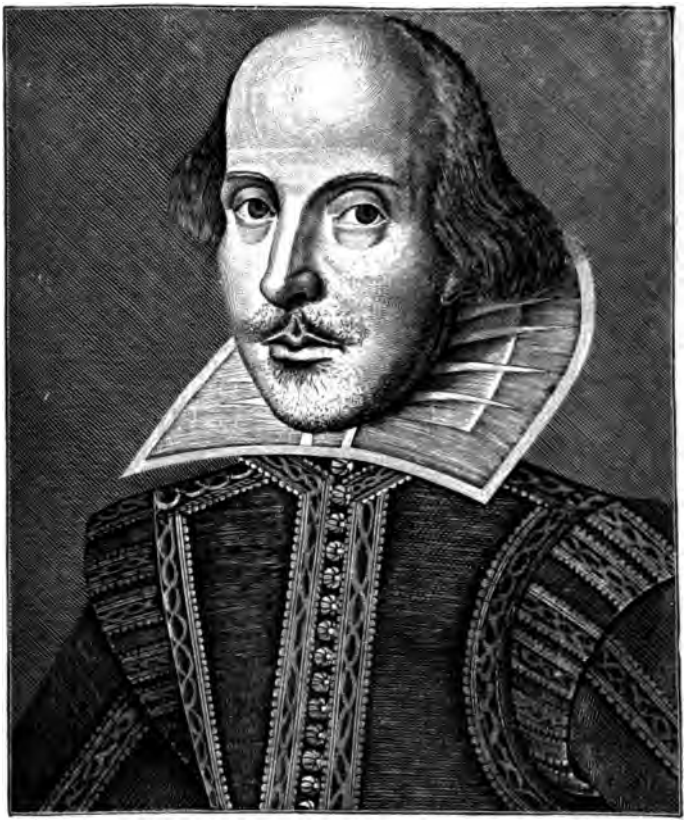
SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

It is profitable for a class which is to take up Shakespeare to read two or three of the plays in Manly's "Specimens." Class analysis should dissect these plays, showing their departure from the canons of classic art, their attempts at dramatic structure and passion, their crudity, their promise. A play of Marlowe might next be read, to show the genius and power latent in the nation, and the class will then be prepared to understand something of Shakespeare's art in relation to his times.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Any dramatic types or dramatists mentioned in this chapter may be made the subject of a separate lecture.

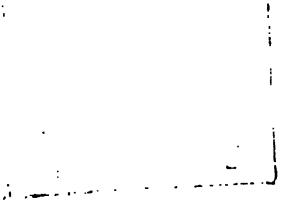
[1] "Tamburlaine," Act II, Sc. VII.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1564-1616

Fac-simile of the Droeshout portrait which appeared in the First Folio



CHAPTER VIII

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

I. The Elizabethan Stage

WE must not think of the theatre in Elizabeth's time as if it had been like our own. The travelling drama of the middle ages did indeed give place to a regular theatre in separate permanent buildings; before the end of the queen's reign there were eleven such buildings licensed in London. Companies of professional actors were also gradually formed. But the conditions of the stage were primitive in the extreme. The public theatres were roofed over only in part; the stage projected into the yard, and was surrounded on all sides by spectators, while the favored gentlefolk and courtiers actually sat upon it, forming part of the show. Scenery was rough; the actors were aided by no illusion of distance or perspective, but were simply a raised group in the midst of the audience. Costumes, sometimes very handsome, were always of the style of the day, and it is curious to imagine Shakespeare's ancient Romans in Elizabethan ruffs. No women acted, and all the women's parts were taken by boys. These were the conditions under which were presented "The Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "King Lear." They would seem strange, ludicrous even,

to-day. But after all, what did scenery matter? The alchemy of Shakespeare's imagination was worth more to show the essential truth of things than illusions produced by plaster and paint, and his public shared something of his power. An Elizabethan audience was probably the most imaginative that has ever existed except in ancient Greece. Who would not gladly abandon our large stages with retreating scenes, our play of artificial lights, our realism of setting, if we could as a nation reach that fervor of imaginative passion out of which a Shakespeare might arise?

II. Shakespeare's Life

1564–1616. We know about Shakespeare's life as much as we know about that of many of his contemporaries, though not nearly so much as we should like to know. He was a country boy, not city-bred like Spenser, and his only university was the big world. Strangers to-day, visiting his birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, may still pray in the church where he is buried, a church quite recent in his day, see with their own eyes what the town as he saw it looked like, and wander through the region which he knew. It is a rich, pleasant, level country that lies around Stratford; the natural home and background for human life, with no surprising beauty nor grandeur to arrest or absorb the mind. Such as it was, Shakespeare knew and loved it well; this we know from many touches in his plays, and also because he returned thither when his fame was won, to live and die.

Shakespeare's father was a respected tradesman of Stratford, and at one time mayor of the town. It is interesting to notice that during his year of office the corporation for the first time entertained actors at Stratford; but William was only four years old at this time. The family fortunes seemingly continued good till he was a boy of about thirteen, but after that time they declined and the family sank into debt. The one thing we know for certain about his life at this time is that when he was only eighteen years old he married a woman named Anne Hathaway, eight years older than himself, and that before he was twenty-two three children were born to him. When he was about twenty-three years old, he left Stratford and his wife and little family, and went up to London to try his fortunes.

Shakespeare attached himself to the stage, at first, if tradition speaks true, as a call-boy or even in a lower capacity. But very soon he became an actor, and continued to act till late in life, being one of the company appointed king's players at the accession of James I. We all long to know the parts that Shakespeare acted, but as far as tradition tells us they were very minor parts; the Ghost in "Hamlet," for instance, and old Adam in "As You Like It." Just when he began to make plays we do not know, but by 1592 the references of a jealous rival show that he was already known as a dramatist. For a while, however, he probably wrote nothing wholly his own, but was employed, after the fashion of the time, in furbishing up old plays. By the time he was thirty-four we find references which prove him to have been a respected and fairly pros-

perous man, and we have various indications that he restored the fortunes of his house, bought property at Stratford, and was a shrewd man of business. He apparently never lost his early love for Stratford, for he returned to the little town when he was about forty-five years old, and lived there as a country gentleman till his death, in 1616. His daughters survived him; his only son, Hamnet, had died when eleven years old.

This is a dry record. And yet Shakespeare's life was really one of the most varied and eventful ever known by man. For within the compass of his mind were lived out the experiences of Falstaff and Macbeth, of Lear and Beatrice, of Titania and Cleopatra, of Juliet, Prospero, and Hamlet. Their jests, their joys, their agonies, their anxieties, their passions, were all explored by him, and he doubtless knew much about them all which he never saw fit to tell. The inner world is, when we come to think of it, the only real world for everybody. But it is to be questioned if any other man ever lived in an inner world where such marvellous things happened as in Shakespeare's.

We dare to feel that we draw near to Shakespeare's own personal experience as we follow the line of development in his dramas. To attempt this is indeed somewhat precarious, for the drama deliberately veils personality instead of revealing it, as the lyric claims to do. Yet a man's character and experience may be partly judged by the society he chooses, and Shakespeare was assuredly not in the same mood when he lived in his dreams with Titania as when he lived with King Lear.

Let us follow his works in order, remembering

that the detail of the chronology is often debatable, but that critics are fairly well agreed to-day on the main divisions or groupings of the plays.

III. Shakespeare's Work

First group, poems and early plays. "In the workshop."

By the time Shakespeare was twenty-nine he had produced seven plays and two long poems. This was no inconsiderable achievement; yet had he died at twenty-nine, like Marlowe, we should not have regretted his loss keenly, for this work, though clever in the extreme, was not immeasurably above the average level of the day.

Very likely Shakespeare himself cared more for the poems than for the plays. The names of them were "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece." They show the literary tastes of the time: the fastidious choice of phrase, the quest for sweetness in movement, the classic sentiment, often caught at second-hand. They are not so poetic, not so powerful, as a youthful poem of Marlowe's, "Hero and Leander." Almost the only promise of the great dramatist in them is in an occasional concreteness and freshness of style, as in a famous description of horses found in "Venus and Adonis," a description which at once shows the author to be a man who could look straight at fact.

The probable plays of the period are: "Titus Andronicus," a tragedy of blood; "Henry VI," a historical chronicle play in three parts; "Love's Labor's Lost," a bright society comedy, after the fashion of Lyly: "The Comedy of Errors," modelled upon a Latin play of Plautus: and "The Two Gen-

tlemen of Verona," a romantic comedy from an Italian source, in which Shakespeare's power in creating character first clearly appears. Several of these dramas were probably old plays which Shakespeare touched up; and the mere list shows how modestly he was learning his trade, making available material more effective for the stage, and following on the conventional dramatic lines. The dramas of this time show a growing command of style, and a surprising versatility and facility in dramatic experiments.

Second group. "In the world."

It is quite different with the next group, written when Shakespeare was between twenty-nine and thirty-six years old. Here the great genius appears, greater in knowledge of the human heart and in command of poetry than any other Englishman of his age. Shakespeare had found himself. "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "Richard III," "Richard II," "King John," "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry IV," in its two parts, "Henry V," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "As You Like It," "Much Ado About Nothing," and "Twelfth Night," are the dramas commonly assigned to this period. They comprise, as will be seen, six historical plays, one tragedy, and seven comedies.

The historical plays of this group are the most notable expression of her national consciousness that England has ever had. Some of them have archaic elements derived from the old chronicle plays; they seem to us at times operatic, or lyrical rather than dramatic. But from these elements the later plays, notably "Henry IV," and "Henry V,"

escape into the large air of reality. They manifest triumphantly the breadth of Shakespeare's knowledge of men. At his touch, living persons rise up from the dry records of history. We no longer listen to moral harangues, or didactic lessons drawn from the fates of nations, as in "Gorboduc"; we move about easily, in the tavern, on the battlefield, in the council chamber, face to face with our fellow-men. It was a joyous and warmly human heart which discovered Falstaff; it was a heart that thrilled responsive to the image of grave heroic nobleness, which divined in history and made live forever that splendid English picture of manhood charged at once with energy and humility, King Henry V. Yet in the remaining dramas of this time we find a still greater treasure. Two of these dramas are rather boisterous comedies, and incite us less to joy than to laughter: "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and "The Taming of the Shrew." Those that remain —"A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Merchant of Venice," "Much Ado About Nothing," "As You Like It," and "Twelfth Night"—are of a different type. They manifest to us the fullest beauty consistent with an actual humanity that our literature knows. They are radiant with happy grace, with sparkling wit, with feeling tender, gay, and pure. The world they show us is a world in which we may rejoice, and the characters they make known are people who endear human nature. Shakespeare wrote at this time only one tragedy, and in "Romeo and Juliet," the beauty of poetry and feeling overpowers pain. We leave the tomb over which the bereaved fathers clasp their

hands in reconciliation, grieving indeed, but exulting also, in a loveliness sealed eternal by death.

Five of these six dramas are placed in Italy, the land of romance. Almost all the chief actors are young; age when it appears is only a foil, and the world is to youth and love. However the plot tangles, we trust that joy will follow; that lovers bewildered by fairy pranks will straighten out their sentiments in the morning, that maidens will escape their exile in strange lands, lay aside their masculine costume, and win at last their hearts' desire, that slanders will be disabused, and a way found to avoid all the tragedy that threatens. For threats of tragedy these dramas give, just enough to impart zest to merriment and character to bliss. A grim figure like Shylock may at rare intervals pass across our vision, but he serves only to enhance the revel of sumptuous joy and generous friendship. Sorrow is in this world of Shakespeare's early comedies, because it is in the world of real human life; but harmony is their outcome. They reflect and glorify the earlier mood of the Elizabethan age; the ecstasy in living, the light-hearted recognition of a blessedness at the heart of the world.

Transition.

But here we must stop for a little. "Twelfth Night," the last play of this period, was acted in 1601 and probably written in 1600. It is a delightful and masterly summary, as it were, of all the motifs and the dramatic elements of which, in the preceding dramas, Shakespeare had discovered the charm. The queen had only three more years to live. Shakespeare himself was now thirty-six years old, and a man married at eighteen does not feel young

at thirty-six. We should know without being told that "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Twelfth Night" were the work of an older man than "A Midsummer Night's Dream." A little graver note is creeping in, a touch of irony at times, almost a stealthy shadow. We long to know what was happening to the man himself as these bright plays flowed from him.

The sonnets.

It is a great temptation to think that we can tell. For at this time, and perhaps during the following years, Shakespeare was writing a series of sonnets. Sonnets are lyrics, and lyrics purport to be self-revealing. They were the literary fashion of the time, yet we know that, under some of the sonnet-sequences, as under Spenser's, there was a real story. Whether or not there was such a story here we cannot tell. Critics wrangle about it, and not only critics but poets.

"With this key,
Shakespeare unlocked his heart,"

says Wordsworth; and Browning retorts: —

"Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he."

If we take the sonnets at their face value and in their commonly accepted order, they seem to pass from light, elaborate, literary exercises into poems of grave and deep passion. The first series, of 126, is addressed to a young man, Shakespeare's dear and cherished friend; the second series, of 27, to a woman. Who this woman is, we do not know, and concerning the identity of the friend of the first series, there has been much discussion. We know

that Shakespeare had by this time won the patronage of the Earl of Southampton, a brilliant nobleman, nine years younger than himself, to whom he had dedicated his narrative poems; and most critics agree on him as the friend to whom the sonnets were addressed. We can easily see how the beautiful nobleman — for Southampton's portrait shows him to have possessed great beauty — may have fascinated the poor player. But the story of the sonnets is sad; for Shakespeare's mistress seems to have betrayed him for his beloved friend, and he was left doubly desolate. Spenser's love story ran melodiously smooth; Sidney faced indeed sharp temptation, but looked upward at least to his beloved, rejoiced in her virtue, and was purified by her purity. Shakespeare, if we may trust the sonnets, knew that bitter experience — a love that does not aspire but stoops, a passion for one unworthy.

Whether the story of the sonnets is literally true or not does not after all so much matter. What they incontrovertibly tell us is that Shakespeare, in middle life, whether through personal or imaginative experience, had plunged his plummet into the tumultuous depths of human agony and sin. The thought that beauty, life, even loyalty itself, are mutable and vanish into darkness, wrings the poet's heart; and the one consolation to which he desperately clings is, not that there is another country where decay enters not, but that even human love can rise triumphant in constancy over faithlessness and change: —

> "Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds
> Or bends with the remover to remove:

O no! it is an ever fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken."

This is the highest habitual level reached by the sonnets; they reveal a mental state which none of the moods of cheerful or sentimental feeling that Shakespeare had so far expressed in his dramas could comfort or relieve.

Third group. "Out of the depths."

"Out of the Depths" is the heading given by Mr. Dowden to the next great group of plays. They include three dark and ironical comedies, quite different in tone from the comedies that preceded, "All's Well that Ends Well," "Measure for Measure," and "Troilus and Cressida"; and the great tragedies "Julius Cæsar," "Hamlet," "Othello," "Lear," "Macbeth," "Antony and Cleopatra," "Coriolanus," "Timon of Athens." All these plays were written when Shakespeare was between thirty-six and forty-four years old — between 1600 and 1608. His worldly fortunes were improving at this time; he was part owner from 1599 of the Globe Theatre, and we have evidence that he did not neglect practical affairs. But what must his inner life have been!

None of these plays are from English history; three are drawn from the stern annals of Rome, which Shakespeare knew through North's noble translation of Plutarch. The comedies are all sadder if possible than tragedy. The tragedies comprise the greatest tragic work, apart from the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, that the world has ever seen.

It is almost impossible to discuss Shakespeare's

tragedies. One wishes to bow before them, awe-struck into silence; for they reveal the mysterious depths of life. Such depths are sometimes, perhaps, sounded in youth, but not often; the persons in these dramas have advanced farther on their life's journey than in those of the last period. The plays as a rule disregard the shallow law of unity in time, and cover a wide sweep of years, showing us the greater unity that binds together in phases of one experience, crises of youth, of middle life, of age. Hamlet is young, though not so young as Romeo, but it is the sin of mature man and woman that drives him to a madness only half simulated. Macbeth, when the drama opens, is beset by that temptation of middle life, ambition; and his way of life is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf, before the story reaches its tragic end. Othello himself tells us that he is "declined into the vale of years." Cleopatra is no novice in winning the hearts of men. And "Lear," finally, is the supreme and naked tragedy of deserted old age.

These dramas face steadily the worst that man can conceive of sin and shame. They show us tragedy deeper far than that of Shakespeare's early story of the star-crossed lovers, the helpless brightness of whose youth and love was overtaken by the swift shadow of death. For here we contemplate moral wreck rather than material disaster: character is destiny,—character how often weak, passionate, perverse!—and all the sorrow to which the dramas move springs direct from human folly, wilfulness, or sin.

The first two tragedies, "Julius Cæsar" and

"Hamlet," have been called the tragedies of thought. They reveal a new Shakespeare, a man who has reflected profoundly and gravely, though the philosophical element, strong in both dramas, is merged, as it ought to be, in concrete human experience. Sad though these dramas are, they uplift us because each shows a protagonist whom we may love and honor. Yet Brutus and Hamlet both fail in fulfilling their appointed task. Noble as they are, a profound inner weakness makes it impossible for either to be an adequate instrument in the restoration of a broken harmony. Their failure, not their death, is the tragedy of these plays.

In the other dramas of this period, we trace the titanic ravages of passion; we are called upon to watch, not weakness only, but sin. Dark characters appear, such as the bright imagination of the younger Shakespeare never could have conceived: an Iago, a Regan, a Goneril. The main characters never pass out of the pale of our sympathy; while we condemn Macbeth and his wife, Othello, Lear, we do not cease to love them; yet we recognize how the terrible sorrow, which they both inflict and bear, springs from their own wrong-doing. In all these dramas, holy human ties are wrenched asunder by selfish passion, leaving a world in ruins. In Macbeth, these are the ties that hold a subject loyal to his king; in Othello, the bonds of marriage; in Lear, the tender bonds of kindred, violated first by the wilful king, then, in retaliation inevitable though fearful, by his unnatural daughters. The theme in "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Coriolanus" is in general the same, for the claims of country are subordinated to the insistent demands

of personal desire. Law thus is disregarded, and we see exposed the elemental forces of wild passion, making their fierce way toward chaos. We skirt the borders of madness; and in the moral gloom that hangs over these great tragedies, strange visitants, witches and ghosts, gather out of the shadow.

Why is it a greater happiness than pain to know these heart-breaking dramas? Why do we love to see them on the stage, to read them in our closets? The answer would lead us far into the whole philosophy of art and its relations to life. The truth is that we all crave to know what life really is, whether the knowledge make us glad or not, for life, even at its darkest, is sacred. And there is one reassuring thing about these storm-tossed dramas of Shakespeare's. Never for one moment does he let us lose sight of the difference between good and evil. The actors may lose sight of it; may cry in weariness and horror that "all best things are now confused to ill"; all the persons in the play may be bewildered, invaded by the worst of evils, moral confusion: not we. There is indeed little vision of the heavens suggested by these dramas; such vision, in Shakespeare, we never find. But the moral values remain august and intact, and the Law of Right, inexorable, terrible, yet awfully luminous, shines through their earth-born murkiness with a lustre never darkened nor dimmed.

Fourth group. "On the heights."

During this period, we must notice that the aspect of English literature had changed. The queen had died; James I was on the throne. Shakespeare's early contemporaries — Marlowe, Greene, Peele, and Lodge — were silent. Others were rising to

take their place: Ben Jonson, Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, and Tourneur. The nation was at the height of imaginative power and production, but a shadow was invading it; the lyric was becoming thought-freighted, often grave and sad; philosophical prose was developing. Shakespeare's tragedies are by no means the darkest expression of life which was to be produced by the literature of the Renaissance; for even when they lead us into a gloom of midnight, the eternal stars shine out, and with almost no exception they end with a hint of a new dawn. Yet their sadness is part of a general mood of sadness, which was succeeding in England the ecstasy, the spontaneous and light-hearted joy, of the early Renaissance.

But in sadness Shakespeare's mighty spirit did not permanently dwell. It skirted madness and despair, but passed them by, and emerged into a noble sanity. The plays of his last period prove this; this period lasts from 1608 to 1616, the year of his death. It includes two inferior plays, probably written in collaboration with some one else, "Timon of Athens," and "Pericles," and these seem to express exhaustion of creative power, and a sort of helplessness rare in Shakespeare; but during these last years he gave us also three dramas illumined with fair and peaceful light: "Cymbeline," "The Tempest," and "The Winter's Tale." It is probable that these plays were written at Stratford, where, during the later years of his life, he seems mostly to have lived. There is no record directly connecting him with theatrical life after 1609, but there are various traces of his presence in the country.

The dramas of this time — including Henry VIII, of which Fletcher probably wrote a large portion — show the master craftsman; yet there is in them something that makes us feel the author withdrawn from the stage. They gain less from acting, more from reading, than the earlier plays. Shakespeare writes no longer tragedies of passion, of ambition, jealousy, voluptuousness, or the ravings of madness; he reverts to the serener themes of high romance. There is less richness of imagination and fancy, less spontaneous poetry, than in the comedies of his eager youth; but, reading these plays, we rejoice with Wordsworth in "years that bring the philosophic mind," feeling with him that, though the first splendor of life's fresh dawn soon fades, there is compensation in the sober colors of "the clouds that gather round the setting sun." Once more Shakespeare writes of youth; youth not now self-sufficiently absorbing the scene, but interpreted by a loving age, that touches its bright beauty with hands of tender benediction. Perdita among her flowers, Miranda on her desert isle, true-hearted Imogen in her high mountain refuge, do not fascinate us with charm, sweet or baleful, like the earlier heroines from Juliet to Cleopatra; they are described with a spirit of tender and touching affection, but it is the spirit of the father and the sage, rather than that of the lover.

Over all these dramas rests an exquisite calm. They have been called the dramas of reconciliation, for as the plays of the preceding period deal with ties torn asunder, these in every case deal with ties renewed and harmony restored. We are glad that it was on such pictures as these that the last thoughts

of Shakespeare dwelt. One of these dramas, "The Tempest," is in particular of peculiar beauty. It is a symbolic poem, baffling, yet alluring us with subtlest hints of hidden spiritual meaning; and it interests us profoundly as the one important excursion of our greatest realist into the realm of mysticism. At the very outset of his artistic career, Shakespeare had written another fairy drama, and we see all he had learned about life if we compare "The Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest." On the whole, it is fair to conclude that he had gained, not only in insight, but in abiding joy. In the early poem humanity is quite at the mercy of fairy sport and play, helpless to direct even its emotions, bewildered and befooled at every turn; in the later, Prospero, the great and wise magician, governs with serene power the elemental forces, and bends their freakish wills at his pleasure to beneficent human service. Manhood has become to Shakespeare's older eyes more potent and august than to his youth. This play, and all the plays of this period, are on the heights indeed, knowing, but knowing from above, the passions of earth. So closed the work of Shakespeare; and his last recorded mood was a mood of large sanity and hard-won peace.

IV. Shakespeare's Art

His sources.

Shakespeare's dramas are, next to our authorized translation of the Bible, the crowning glory of the English tongue. And yet, of what we sometimes mean by originality they have but little. The great dramatist continued in every respect the tra-

ditions that had preceded him, the forms of tragedy, history, comedy, that earlier dramatists had evolved. His plots were almost all borrowed from some well-known source. "Love's Labor's Lost" and "The Tempest" are, according to present critical knowledge, the only stories which he probably invented as a whole. More than this, he not only followed earlier writers with docility, he took up many popular motifs of his day. A ghost crying revenge, for instance, was a stock character of the Elizabethan stage; Shakespeare introduced him in "Hamlet" and again in "Julius Cæsar." Nor was he contented with copying other people; he continually copied himself, and when he had found an episode, like a heroine disguised in boy's clothes or a case of mistaken identity, pleasing to his public, he fearlessly used the same thing over and over.

His originality.

And yet, what does all this matter? It simply goes to prove how the individuality of the greatest genius is rooted in that of the race. But the peculiar power of the genius is that he raises the dead to life. Shakespeare breathed into these old stories, and men and women, in their habit as they lived, arise and walk before us. What though Viola repeat the situation of Rosalind? She is not Rosalind, but a new creation, fresh with an immortal morning. How did Shakespeare make his people live? That is his secret. The daring temper of exploration that marked the Renaissance was in him turned full upon the world of men and women; and wonderful was the result of his search. How did he know that Desdemona breathed out her soul in a lie to exonerate her husband, murmuring, when asked to name

her murderer, "Nobody; I myself; farewell"? How did he know that Lady Macbeth, not yet guilty, started at the innocent word of the messenger, "The king comes here to-night," with the strange cry, "Thou'rt mad to say it"? How did he know that Lear sighed, in the midst of his dying, remorseful sorrow over the corpse of Cordelia, "Prithee, undo this button"? He knew because he was Shakespeare. He did not try, like Dante, to penetrate spiritual mysteries, though he keenly felt their presence; he was content to discover and record the actual contents of the consciousness of men.

His verse.

The verse of Shakespeare follows with exquisite fitness the changes in his ethical mood and dramatic method. His style is always concrete; that is, he writes with his eye, not on his idea of the object, but on the object itself. At first he uses frequent rhyme, his verse is delicately finished, each line is end-stopped or complete in itself; it is a style fitted to render with artificial perfection the fulness of charm and grace. As he goes on his manner changes. Rhyme becomes less and less frequent. Weak and light endings give variety to the blank verse, and, as it flows onward, the force of thought presses unnoting over such small barriers as the ends of lines, and we have what is called overflow verse. The movement is stronger, freer, more broken in cadence, and the verse falls into larger harmonic groups independent of the line division, and reading at times like noble prose. The style is charged and weighted with meaning to the point of obscurity, pressing nearer and nearer to thought, till it seems at times struggling to reveal the consciousness that lies below all power of speech.

Shakespeare the climax of romantic drama.

If Shakespeare's work does not seek to penetrate spiritual mysteries, it is none the less wholly noble. He dares to show us a world shaken and swept by temptation and sorrow, but it is a world in which the moral proportions are sound. His work is never morbid, unless in one or two inferior plays like "Troilus and Cressida" and "Timon of Athens"; it is never shallow. The great romantic drama vindicated in him its claim to freedom. For romantic art rejected all those safeguards of sanity and order afforded by the canons of classic drama; it claimed a right to obey its own free impulse and to roam unchecked throughout the universe. Again and again, in lesser men, both before and after Shakespeare, liberty degenerated into license, and the result was an art painfully uneven, full of flashes of power and beauty, but often æsthetically extravagant and morally unsound. Not so in the drama of Shakespeare. There, romantic art developed an inner strength, a moral harmony and poise, that make it healthful as it is free, inspiring as it is profound. We rise from Shakespeare's dramas assured that human life is a greater thing and more worth living than ever we have realized before.

REFERENCE BOOKS

The Globe Shakespeare. The Temple Shakespeare (single plays, in compact, attractive form). FURNESS's Variorum Shakespeare, in publication. ROLFE's edition, Clarendon Press edition, single plays edited for students. EDWARD DOWDEN, Shakespeare Primer; Shakespeare, His Mind and Art. SIDNEY LEE, Life of Shakespeare. BARRETT WENDELL, William Shakespeare. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPS, Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare. H. W. MABIE, Life of Shakespeare. COLERIDGE, Notes and Lectures on the Plays of Shakespeare. G.

BRANDES, William Shakespeare, a critical study. ABBOTT, Shakespearean Grammar. G. L. CRAIK, The English of Shakespeare. SWINBURNE, A Study of Shakespeare. CARLYLE, Heroes and Hero-Worship. W. HAZLITT, Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. R. MOULTON, Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. BENNETT, Master Skylark. BLACK, Judith Shakespeare.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

It is better to read Shakespeare than to criticise him. If three plays are read, let one be historical ("Julius Cæsar," "Henry V"), one a comedy ("The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It"), one a tragedy ("Macbeth," "King Lear"). Part reading in class is almost always enjoyable, and students above the age of twelve can learn by heart, and act simply, with or without costume, various scenes, if not entire plays. Of course an infinite number of questions for discussion come up during the reading, and it is better to let them arise naturally than to attempt a formal plan of work.

CHRONOLOGY OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

The exact chronology of Shakespeare's plays is very uncertain. Critics, however, are coming to agree about the general order and grouping of the dramas, with a few marked exceptions. The table given below is based on the authority of Sidney Lee. It will be seen that in several cases, notably in the case of "Titus Andronicus," of "Romeo and Juliet," of "Midsummer Night's Dream," of "All's Well that Ends Well," the order is different from that suggested in the text, where the more common, but less recent, theory of Edward Dowden is followed. The general line of treatment in the text is not, however, affected by these changes.

The first folio, published in 1623, is the first trustworthy authority for the text of many of the plays, and contains all the plays, except "Pericles." The quartos are in some instances merely actors' copies surreptitiously printed, though of course they have their value.

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Date of Composition	Publication of First Quarto	Title
1591	1598	Love's Labor's Lost
1591		The Two Gentlemen of Verona
1592		Comedy of Errors
1592	1597	Romeo and Juliet
1592		1, 2, 3, Henry VI
1593	1597	Richard III
1593	1597	Richard II
1593	1600	Titus Andronicus
1594	1600 (2 editions)	The Merchant of Venice
1594		King John
1594–5	1600 (2 editions)	Midsummer Night's Dream
1595		All's Well that Ends Well
1595		The Taming of the Shrew
1597	1598	1 Henry IV
1597	1600	2 Henry IV
1597	1602	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1598	1600	Henry V
1599	1600	Much Ado about Nothing
1599		As You Like It
1600		Twelfth Night
1601		Julius Caesar
1602	1603	Hamlet
1603	1609 (2 editions)	Troilus and Cressida
1604	1622	Othello
1604		Measure for Measure
1606		Macbeth
1606	1608 (2 editions)	King Lear
1607		Timon of Athens
1608	1609 (2 editions)	Pericles
1608		Antony and Cleopatra
1609		Coriolanus
1610		Cymbeline
1611		A Winter's Tale
1611		The Tempest
1611		Henry VIII (with Fletcher)
		The Two Noble Kinsmen (a few touches are Shakespeare's)

CHAPTER IX

THE DECLINE OF THE DRAMA

I. Grouping and Chronology

SHAKESPEARE overtops all his companions; yet his work is only the richest expression of the dramatic impulse that was controlling England. He had contemporaries and successors only less wonderful than himself. Upward of seven hundred plays were acted in England before the end of the reign of King James, and a surprising proportion of those that have come down to us have some mark of genius.

We can tell exactly when the last ripple of this dramatic upheaval died away; for in 1642, when the Civil War broke out, the theatres were closed. Puritan England had other interests than play-acting, and other matters whereon to exercise her imagination. The drama of the Renaissance ran its great course in about fifty years.

The chief dramatists who wrote during the first quarter of the seventeenth century were Ben Jonson, Chapman, Dekker, Heywood, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Tourneur, Middleton, Ford, Massinger, and Shirley. As we follow them, we take a short journey in time but a long one in spirit; for we pass from the gay mood and careless art of the Elizabethan dramatists to the grave and often mor-

bid attitude, the more conscious art, that marks the Jacobean period of English Literature. It is much the same journey that we have just pursued with Shakespeare, from the "Midsummer Night's Dream" to "King Lear," only it explores further reaches of darkness, and does not emerge, as does the drama of Shakespeare, into light and peace.

None of these men began to work till the last five years of the sixteenth century, yet some of them seem, in their loose technique and free joyous spirit, to belong rather to the Elizabethan than to the Jacobean period. Such are especially Dekker and Heywood. Others, though not really so much younger, belong to another generation. Such, for instance, is Beaumont, who died at the age of thirty-one, in the same year with Shakespeare, yet presents an art, despite its beauty, far advanced toward decay. The brevity of the whole development is patent when we find Dekker, who represents its first stage, writing a drama, the "Virgin Martyr," in collaboration with Massinger, who is a dramatist of its very close. It is best to group all these men under the title of the Jacobean dramatists.

II. Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson, 1573–1637.

The first name that we meet in this great group is that of "rare Ben Jonson," — Shakespeare's junior by only nine years, leader of a rival school. Jonson, a sturdy recalcitrant from romance just when romance was scoring its greatest triumphs, did his best all through his life of sixty-four years to establish and maintain in England the classical school

of dramatic art. No one can read Ben Jonson without being amazed at the weight and force of his intellect; imagination and passion are conspicuous by absence. The only light his famous comedies and his stately Roman plays kindle in the mind is admiration, a sort of Aurora Borealis, that illumines but does not warm. They proceed from analysis, not from sympathy. The title of the first was, "Every Man in His Humour," and Jonson's art always gave humors, not men, personified traits set moving on the stage rather than complex men and women. His work reminds one of the method used later in the seventeenth century by Molière in France, and it is good for us to remember that some keen foreign critics prefer the art of Molière to that of Shakespeare.

Dramas.

"Every Man in His Humour," "Every Man out of His Humour," "Volpone or the Fox," "The Silent Woman," "The Alchemist," "Bartholomew Fair," are the names of some of Jonson's best comedies. Of these, "Volpone" and "The Alchemist" are the finest, and there is a kind of splendor and a surprising vigor in them. "Bartholomew Fair," though not so well constructed, is nearer to life, and affords a rich and entertaining study of manners. Jonson's two Roman tragedies, "Sejanus" and "Catiline," are nobly hewn by sheer force out of the bed-rock of his learned mind; but they are difficult to read from their lack of human warmth. Jonson posed as a moralist in the drama, which Shakespeare never did; but his labored works reveal hate and scorn of vice rather than love of virtue, and hence are not a moral force in the same

full sense as the loving, unconscious work of Shakespeare.

Masques and lyrics.

By one of the most curious paradoxes in literature this massive genius was also the author of some of the daintiest, most charming trifles that the welter of time has borne down to us. In connection with Inigo Jones, the architect and decorator, he invented masques to amuse the court of King James. Simply to read the splendid stage directions for these masques stimulates the imagination. Jonson wrote other little lyrics too, and we have also a collection of his vigorous table-talk. His genius may have mellowed as he grew older; at least, he left unfinished at his death a pastoral drama, "The Sad Shepherd," which has a delicate aerial tenderness hard to reconcile with his other dramatic work.

In his later years Jonson became a literary oracle. Younger poets and wits all gathered about his burly figure as he sat in state at the Mermaid Tavern, and listened delightedly to the jokes he cracked and the wisdom he dispensed. We hear of "the tribe of Ben" as we never heard of the tribe of Will. And yet, admired autocrat as he was, the drama would not follow him. The great romantic impulse was too strong. He tried to stem it in mid-current and failed. Had he lived half a century later, when the stream flowed weakly, the case might have been different. For the time came — we are to reach it soon — when the principles Jonson defended prevailed for a season, and people were filled with enthusiasm for law and set rules in writing. But while he lived, the day was still to freedom and romance.

III. The Romantic Dramatists

We return then from Jonson to the romantic drama; and we shall have to look at it in its mass and movement rather than in detail, only touching on some authors who illustrate most forcibly its various phases. At the outset of the seventeenth century we find that this drama still expresses the delight in life, unsubdued and compelling, of the early Renaissance. The charming, careless, spontaneous plays of Dekker, especially his "Old Fortunatus" and "Shoemaker's Holiday," are bubbling over with fun and alit with pure poetry; the work of Heywood, even when tragic, has the simplicity and natural sweetness that bespeak rather closeness to life than intimacy with stagecraft; and these dramatists are, like all the best Elizabethans, thoroughly wholesome even when too outspoken for our modern tastes.

Thomas Dekker, about 1570–1637.

Thomas Heywood, 1581(?)–1640(?)

But before long, a taint seems to creep over the drama even while its beauty deepens. This is most evident in Beaumont and Fletcher, the twin dramatists whose fame in their own day almost eclipsed that of Shakespeare. Their work has many delightful qualities. They have interesting plots, and understand the secret of effective dramatic construction; they control real passion and pathos, and can impart with careless ease that thrill of emotion which Jonson's brilliant labored art can never arouse. Above all, they write poetry of an enchanting sweetness. Yet with all this, theirs is the drama of decadence. Its defects are not those of the undeveloped drama of Marlowe, but those of an art in decay. They lack

Francis Beaumont, 1586(?)–1616, and John Fletcher, 1579–1625.

large sanity and healthfulness; their work is subtly overwrought. They sentimentalize, and on their fairest creations rests too often the stigma from which the work of Shakespeare is so nobly free, the grave stigma of impurity.

The Jacobean drama shows decline in another way yet more clearly; that is, in the terrible gloom that invades it, in its fascinated dwelling on crime and horror, in the tone which it often reflects of fatalism and despair. Shakespeare's most sorrowful tragedies never leave humanity, as do these later plays, helpless and hopeless in the presence of an overmastering fate, the passive prey to its own passions. Outraged old Gloster in "King Lear" may cry aloud, "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport": but we all know that his sorrows are self-inflicted, that "man is man and master of his fate." But when a character in Webster's "Duchess of Malfi" exclaims bitterly, "We are merely the stars' tennis balls, struck and bandied which way please them," we feel that he expresses the soul of the dramatist himself.

John Webster, 16th and 17th centuries.

Cyril Tourneur, 17th century.

John Webster and Cyril Tourneur were past masters in this drama of horror, and the chief examples of the type are Webster's "Duchess of Malfi," and his powerful play, "The White Devil," and the inferior and almost appalling dramas of Tourneur, "The Atheist's Tragedy" and "The Revenger's Tragedy." These plays are lineal descendants of the old "Tragedy of Blood"; but that archaic drama presented its terrors with a sort of lusty zest, while the work of Webster and Tourneur springs from a mind diseased and burdened with

anguish. "The Duchess of Malfi" is the most attractive and human drama of this group, and it is a heart-breaking story of torments heaped on the head of a sweet and unoffending woman, and of the remorse, even to death and madness, visited on her tormentors. Intolerable pathos is almost the only thing that relieves the riotous pageant of evil in these dark plays.

Philip Massinger, 1584–1640.

The last of the significant and powerful dramatists of the Renaissance were Massinger and Ford; and in reading them we feel that the stream of inspiration is running dry.

John Ford, 1586–1640 or later.

Ford is a great poet, however. He has sincerity of feeling, though not always of perception, and an impassioned sensitiveness that reminds one of Shelley. In his best drama, "The Broken Heart," he renders, in a manner worthy of the Sparta where the scene is laid, a high and intense endurance which retains its noble calm in the very presence of despair. But Ford's work is all overstrained, and spoiled by an insufferable morbidness of theme. Massinger, on the other hand, is no diseased victim of his own feelings; he is manly, dignified, and moral; but his copious work shows another evil quality of a dying art, for, though excellent in mechanical construction, it is, even when comic, dry and hard.

The fate of the drama.

So the drama of the Renaissance slowly died; and its doom was just. It had burnt itself out. It had turned away from the heavens, and sought for the full gratification of life in experience of all the joys which this world offers; it found itself confronting death, in a world which mocked desire with satiety or despair. Its gifts of imagination and passion, its

power of poetry, availed nothing; and the closing of the theatres by an outraged Puritan England was only a righteous check from without upon an art which was already languishing from mortal disease within, and dying, like Webster's heroes, "in a mist" of doubt, decay, and pain.

REFERENCE BOOKS

See Ch. VII. The Mermaid Series, with excellent Introductions, gives good text of selected plays. GOSSE, The Jacobean Poets. WARD, Vols. II, III. HAZLITT, Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. CHARLES LAMB, Selections from the Old Dramatists. FLEAY, Biographical Chronicle. Dictionary of National Biography. SWINBURNE has critical studies on many of these men, especially an elaborate monograph on Ben Jonson.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

This chapter in our literary history would better be passed over by young students lightly. Readings may be assigned, or given in class by the teacher, from Ben Jonson's "Masques," or selected scenes from the dramas, as, for instance, the scenes between the child and his uncle in "Bonduca," the 'prentice scenes in "The Shoemaker's Holiday," or the burlesque scenes from "The Knight of the Burning Pestle." Lyrics of Fletcher's and Webster's may be taught.

CHAPTER X

VERSE AND PROSE OF THE LATER RENAISSANCE

WE dropped the study of non-dramatic literature with the death of the queen in 1603; we return now to take a brief survey of that literature from the accession of James I in 1603 to the Restoration in 1660.

I. Historical and Literary Conditions

The national struggle.

Those were stirring times in English history. The drama of national life was more mighty by far than that presented on the stage, for it determined the civil and religious destiny of the nation. In the sixteenth century, the Anglican Church had faced the Roman Catholic, and had prevailed; in the seventeenth, it faced the Puritans, and was temporarily worsted. At the same time, the great struggle was going on between the feudal idea of an absolute monarchy, valorously maintained by the unhappy race of the Stuart kings and their devoted followers, and the larger idea of political freedom toward which the whole nation had for centuries been moving. During the reign of James, this double struggle, though threatening, was quiescent. It rose to a head in the times of Charles I, and the Civil War led to a king's death on the scaffold, and to a Puritan Commonwealth. The Commonwealth endured until the

temporary reaction in the latter part of the century restored to the throne a degenerate Stuart and to the nation a set of political ideas from which the real life had fled.

These heart-searching agitations affected literature, but did not subdue it. During the last period of civil strife, the Wars of the Roses, the Muses had fled from England; during this period, their singing, though faint at times, was constantly heard over the cries of battle. They had gained in confidence. The expression of personal life through art had become a necessary and permanent factor in national experience; and the seventeenth century produced a copious literature both in prose and poetry.

Phases of seventeenth-century literature.

We may distinguish three phases in this literature of the seventeenth century: —

The spirit of the Renaissance.

First, it is a wonderful witness to the vitality of the spirit of the Renaissance that this spirit continues potent till near the end of the century, producing both poetry and prose in the hostile and heated atmosphere of the civil war and of the Commonwealth.

The Puritan spirit.

Second, we find a scanty but extremely significant literature which expresses that phase of national life which was for the time victorious and compelling: the literature of Puritanism.

The classical spirit.

Third, toward the end of the century, after the Restoration, literature entered into a new allegiance, and an entirely new literary period began. This period, of so-called classical literature, will occupy the next book. In this book we have still to trace the last literature of the Renaissance, to study the literature of Puritanism, and to discuss the work of

one of our greatest poets, John Milton, in whom these two currents, strangely united, meet the new current making for classicism in art.

II. Seventeenth-century Poetry

The literature of the later Renaissance is quite different in tone from that of the early. It has the same imaginative fervor and feeling, but it is much graver and more conscious. Its passion often "leaves the earth, to lose itself in the sky," reverting to the religious preoccupation so natural to the Anglo-Saxon race, but so markedly absent during certain phases of the earlier Renaissance.

Minor Jacobean poets.

In Jacobean times, we meet several pleasant minor poets, whose work entitles them to a place in the history of letters. Thomas Campion, a belated Elizabethan in spirit, with a more sustained art, scattered through various "books of airs" little lyrics of ravishing melody which sing themselves in a magical way even when divorced from their music. William Drummond of Hawthornden is a gentle scholar in verse, with a sense for beauty. Michael Drayton's powerful but unillumined mind produced, in 1613, a massive English geography in verse, called the "Polyolbion." Much of Drayton's work belonged to the Elizabethan age, but his best sonnet is Jacobean, and so is the noble ode, "The Battle of Agincourt." For the sake of these and a few other short poems we forgive him the "Polyolbion." William Browne, a writer of pastoral poems, of which the most important is called "Britannia's Pastorals," has by some critics been compared

Thomas Campion, 1540–1623.

William Drummond, 1585–1649.

Michael Drayton, 1563–1631.

"Polyolbion," 1613, 1622.

William Browne, 1590–1645.

to Keats, but he is a Keats turned very languid. Two brother imitators of Spenser, Phineas and Giles Fletcher, cousins of the dramatist, had more original power. Phineas Fletcher's poem in Spenserian stanzas, "The Purple Island," is a long allegory of the human body, and despite its unpromising physiological subject shows real sense for beauty in description. This poem suggests the new interest in science and in semi-philosophical thought which was invading poetry; the poem of Giles Fletcher, "Christ's Victory and Triumph," opens with dignity and imagination the religious poetry of the seventeenth century.

Phineas Fletcher, 1582–1650.

Giles Fletcher, 1588–1623.

John Donne, 1573–1631.

More important than any of these men, however, was the paradoxical figure of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. He began to write long before the death of the queen; he was Dean of St. Paul's under James I, and esteemed the most powerful preacher in England. His poems were apparently not published till 1631, after his death, but they exercised long before this time a profound, obscure influence over younger men, something like that of Browning and Rossetti in our own age. He founded the last school of poetry in the Renaissance, for he inaugurated the style which marks the decadence of romantic art; a style of obscure allusion and fantastic metaphor, showing almost in a diseased way the quest for strangeness so characteristic of the romantic temper.

Caroline poets.

An interesting group of poets belongs to the time of Charles, or to the Commonwealth. Let us enumerate them: George Wither, Francis Quarles, George Herbert, Thomas Carew, Richard Crashaw,

William Habington, Sir John Suckling, Henry Vaughan, Sir Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick.

The religious poets.

Donne had sung his experience as sinner and as saint with equal energy. In this group of men, two tendencies appear, the secular, and the religious. The work of the stronger of them, of Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and at times of several others, is suffused with a glow of spiritual feeling. They were deeply religious, but not in the austere and argumentative fashion of the Puritanism current in their day. They belonged to the Anglican tradition; some of them were, some of them became, Roman Catholics. They brought grace, imaginative passion, and instinctive love of symbolism, even a sort of chivalrous loyalty, into their life of faith. They were of the monarchical party, and their gaze, when not turned upward and inward, often seems to us to be directed backward; but they had rich natures, and their poetry pulsates and shines. Theirs is the red afterglow of the great Renaissance day. Mr. Shorthouse's beautiful novel, "John Inglesant," gives the best idea of the spirit and character of these seventeenth-century men.

George Herbert, 1593–1633.

Saintly George Herbert, with his collection of poems called "The Temple," is the most famous of these poets, and his work has a quaint, sincere, undying charm. But another of the group, Henry Vaughan, equally saintly, was the more original spirit. Vaughan's poems, of which the best are in the collection he named, in the fantastic fashion of the day, "Silex Scintillans," strike distinctly a new note. He had a far-darting imagination, and he knew the soul of man. He lived among the Welsh

Henry Vaughan, 1622–1695.

hills, and to find any parallel for his feeling toward nature, we must travel back to Cynewulf and the Welsh bards, or forward to Wordsworth, who in his "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" distinctly caught his inspiration from Vaughan. The life of the Church and the life of nature are fused in his work with daring sacramental passion.

The secular poets.

The other men of this group, among whom Vaughan was perhaps the most surprising genius, had each a temperament and a word all his own; no set of minor authors better deserves study. One likes to feel that the music of the Renaissance died away in their work rather than in the loose, though gay and sweet melodies of the reckless so-called Cavalier poets. Yet we could ill afford to miss the spirited little songs of those gallant, ill-starred gentlemen, Lovelace and Suckling, in whom the mood of adventure leaped into a last bright flame. They have left us but a handful of lyrics, — the swan song of chivalry and loyalty in the Renaissance.

Richard Lovelace, 1618–1658.

Sir John Suckling, 1609–1641.

Robert Herrick, 1591–1674.

One of these poets, however, is of higher rank; Herrick, the festive, pagan-souled clergyman, who through times of stormy national disaster lived in his country parsonage, and sang with a gayety worthy of an earlier day of Julia's silk attire, of harvest homes and Mayings, of daffodils and gillyflowers, and all the bright detail of the country. But let him give us his own programme: —

"I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers,
I sing of Maypoles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.

* * * * * * *

I sing of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, — and hope to have it after all."[1]

"Hesperides," 1648.

"Noble Numbers," 1648.

It is a hope that his every reader echoes; for Herrick endears himself to them all. But the "Noble Numbers," in which he sings of divine and lofty themes, are less delightful to us than the little lyrics of the "Hesperides," wherein the first part of his promise is so well fulfilled. These dainty, often minute poems, seem to catch the last fine echo of the sweet laughter of the Elizabethan dawn. With Herrick it may almost be said that we bid farewell to spontaneity, to pure joyousness, to lyrical ease, till we are greeted by them again, a century and a half later, in the poems of Robert Burns.

III. Seventeenth-century Prose

Francis Bacon, Lord St. Albans, 1561–1626.

Prose, in the seventeenth century, had become at last a well-accredited and dignified instrument, with an assured literary tradition. In style, as in substance, it continued on the lines established by Bacon and Hooker. The chief work of Bacon, indeed, belongs to the seventeenth century. The first ten Essays were printed in 1597, but the last complete author's edition, in which the number was enlarged to fifty-eight, did not appear till 1625, the year before Bacon's death. The majestic "Advancement of Learning" appeared in 1605; in 1620 came the Latin "Novum Organum." Bacon first taught people to try to discover the truths of nature and natural law instead of inventing them; he started in England that induc-

[1] Herrick, first poem in the "Hesperides."

tive method which has revolutionized thought and given us modern science. It is indeed a worthy part of the achievement of the Renaissance to have started men on the quest for the realities of nature as well as the realities of character. The unfinished "New Atlantis," published in 1627, completed Bacon's work with a dream of a new world inhabited by men who, having mastered the forces of nature, shaped life almost as they would.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, 1608–1674.

History reached a dignified success in Lord Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion," which was actually begun while the Civil War was in progress, and also in his autobiography. But most of the prose produced during the reigns of James and Charles and during the Commonwealth, was of a religious character. Much of it, naturally enough, considering what was happening at the time, was controversial; but the breath of controversy withers art, and this extensive pamphlet literature, except when written by a man like Milton, so great that even controversy can scorch his work only in spots, does not interest the pilgrim of beauty. It is otherwise, however, with some great and living books of the seventeenth century: with Bishop Andrewes's sermons and devotions, Richard Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," the very name of which suggests the temper of the times; Fuller's "Holy and Profane State" and his "Worthies of England"; and the works of Jeremy Taylor, of Izaak Walton, of Sir Thomas Browne. These books breathe an ampler air than that of theological discussion. They command rich harmonies of style; they have a quaint stateliness, a fervor, an eloquence, that is all their

Religious prose.

own. The thought and style of Jeremy Taylor are borne upward by the "wingy mysteries of divinity," and his "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying" still hold their own on many tables beside the "Imitation of Christ." Reading these books, or the devotions of Lancelot Andrewes, we realize the intense religious experience that in this strange century of contrasts coexisted with the mood which produced the dramas of Ford.

Jeremy Taylor, 1613–1667.

There is a sweet meditative earnestness about the "Lives" of Izaak Walton; his "Compleat Angler" takes us, in delightful company, into cool nooks beside the running streams of rural England. Like many seventeenth-century writers, Walton becomes to us a very vivid and distinct personality. But among all these delightful men, there is none whom one would more eagerly call friend than that most sympathetic of physicians, Sir Thomas Browne. It is in his "Vulgar Errors," his "Urn Burial," above all in his "Religio Medici," that he reveals to us his lovable personality; a personality full of quaint and kindly humor, of large charity, of mingled intelligence and superstition. His English is the nobly modulated and glowing prose of which the secret, after the seventeenth century, was lost till Lamb discovered it once more. Far more than Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne deserves the title of our English Montaigne.

Izaak Walton, 1593–1683.

Sir Thomas Browne, 1605–1682.

We cannot talk of the prose literature of England and omit the Book which is the greatest glory of English prose in its first power and freshness; which has entered more fully than any other book, more fully even than Shakespeare, into the blood and

The English Bible.

sinew of the English race: the Authorized Version of the Bible, which was issued in 1611.

Early versions.

Many versions had preceded it. After the translation of Wyclif in the fourteenth century, made from the Latin Vulgate, came the long age of arrest, during which people were no more alive to the Scriptures than to other high matters. But with the New Learning the desire for a Bible that could be "understanded of the people" grew swiftly clamorous. Thrilling is the story of the disinterested labors given to this great cause. The famous New Testament of William Tyndale, printed in 1526, was only the first of numerous translations of either the whole or part of the Bible, published before 1539. All this work was done by private men, but in 1539 appeared the noble Bishop's Bible, under the auspices of Cranmer and sanctioned for public use. The Prayer-book version of the Psalter, still in use, is from this Bible, which was the basis of all later translation. After this time Bibles multiplied; but the language was in flux, and the times were perhaps hardly ripe for a permanent version until, in 1604, a year after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the most godly and learned men of the Renaissance at its prime gathered together at the summons of King James, to produce, working on the basis of their predecessors, the version which is in all our hands to-day.

The Authorized version, 1611.

No moment could have been more fortunate from the point of view of letters. Only men of strong Christian faith could have produced the Book, only men of learning. The necessity of clinging to the original Hebrew and Greek rescued the style from

the extravagance and prolixity which were the dangers of the time, while the rich vocabulary, the color and movement, the uplifted harmonies and poignant cadences, that marked the best seventeenth-century prose find their culmination here.

With marvellous swiftness the Book took possession of England, and the style of our best authors ever since has been formed upon it. To instance only moderns, what would the prose of Carlyle, of Ruskin, of Newman, of Matthew Arnold, be without the influence of the Scriptures? We may note at once, during the seventeenth century, two literary results from its appearance. It became the book of the common people; it reached a public which no other English book had ever reached; and it was thus a uniting force, making for intellectual and spiritual democracy. Then, it emphasized immensely, though of course it did not introduce, the influence of the Hebrew race over the English people. Greece and Rome, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany, have all had their respective parts to play in shaping the English; but no national influence has struck so deep or has so penetrated the vital regions of English personality as the influence of Palestine, felt through the Hebrew Scriptures.

REFERENCE BOOKS

For the history of the times, S. R. GARDINER, The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution. GREEN'S History, Ch. VIII.

GOSSE gives a good account of many of the poets treated in this chapter in his Jacobean Poets. Extracts from all are found in WARD'S English Poets, II. Attractive editions of Herrick, Donne, Vaughan, are in the Muses Library (Charles

Scribners). HERBERT'S Temple has been reprinted in facsimile, with a Preface by JOHN SHORTHOUSE. BACON'S New Atlantis is found in MORLEY'S Ideal Commonwealths. Clarendon is accessible in Selections by the Very Rev. G. D. BOYLE, Clarendon Press. WALTON'S Compleat Angler can be had in Cassell's Universal Library. BROWNE'S Religio Medici is in the Camelot Series. CRAIK'S English Prose Selections, II, gives extracts from the prose writers here treated.

MASSON'S Life of Milton, I, Ch. VI, describes admirably the state of literature in 1630. MASTERMAN'S The Age of Milton covers the period.

TRAILL, Social England, Vol. IV.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The authors treated in this chapter are among the most interesting minor figures in English letters. But until the student knows something of the great men, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, he would better take these on trust. A few hours may, however, well be spent in pure, unanalyzed enjoyment of Herrick and Herbert, and little appreciations of these poets may be prepared as compositions. Walton and Browne should be introduced, so that the few who are born their friends may enter as soon as may be into the rich privilege of their friendship. The rhythm and fervor of the Authorized Version of the Scriptures should be studied in carefully chosen extracts.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The Historical Background of the Times; Bacon's "New Atlantis" compared with More's "Utopia"; Literary Influence of the English Bible.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1579–1590	**Stephen Gosson,** 1554–1623. "School of Abuse," 1579. Etc. **John Lyly,** 1553–1606. "Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit," 1579. Plays. **Sir Thomas North,** 1535–1601. "Translation of Plutarch's Lives" (from the French of Amyot), 1579. Etc. **The Shepherd's Calendar,** 1579. **Richard Hakluyt,** 1553–1616. "Voyages," 1582, 1587, 1589 (expanded, 1598–1600). **Robert Greene,** 1560–1592. "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay;" acted 1588, pr. 1594. Other plays. "The Repentance of Robert Greene," 1592. **George Peele,** 1558(?)–1598(?) "The Arraignment of Paris," 1584. "The Old Wives' Tale;" acted ab. 1589, pub. 1595. Etc. "Handful of Pleasant Delights," 1584. (Collection of lyrics.) **Christopher Marlowe,** 1564–1593. "Tamburlaine the Great," 1590. "Edward II," 1594.	**Tasso.** "Gerusalemme Liberata," 1581. **Giordani Bruno.** "Della Causa Principio ed Uno." "Dell' Infinito Universo," 1584. **Guarini.** "Pastor Fido," acted 1585. "Volksbuch," published at Frankfort, containing story of Faust, 1587. **Montaigne,** 1533–1592.	Plays on Sunday abolished, 1580. University of Edinburgh, 1582. Raleigh in Virginia, 1584. Battle of Zutphen, 1586. Death of Mary Stuart, 1587. Spanish Armada defeated, 1588.	Academy of Florence, 1580. Gregorian Calendar, 1582. Paul Veronese (p), 1528–1588. William of Orange assassinated, 1584. Henry IV, of France, 1589–1610. Tycho Brahe, 1546–1601.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1579–1590	"Dr. Faustus," 1604. "The Jew of Malta"; acted ab. 1588. "The Massacre at Paris." Etc. **Thomas Kyd.** "Hieronymo" (by Kyd?), acted 1588, pr. 1605. "The Spanish Tragedy," bef. 1600. Etc. **Thomas Nash.** Plays. **George Puttenham,** ab. 1530–ab. 1600. "Art of English Poesie," 1589. Etc.	English Players in Germany, 1590.	Globe Theatre opened, ab. 1594.	First Microscope, 1590.
1590–1600	**Edmund Spenser,** 1552–1599. "Faerie Queene," Bks. I–III, 1590. "Faerie Queene," Bks. IV–VI, 1596. "Complaints" (containing the "Ruins of Time," "Tears of the Muses," "Virgil's Gnat," "Prosopopoia," or "Mother Hubbard's Tale," "The Ruins of Rome," "Muiopotmos," "Visions of this World's Vanity," "Visions of Petrarch," "Visions of Bellay"), 1591. "Daphnaida," 1591. "Colin Clout's come Home Again," 1595.	St. Francis de Sales, 1567–1622. First Opera in Florence, 1595. Death of Tasso, 1595.	Bodleian founded, 1598. Tyrone's Rebellion in Ireland, 1598–1600. Expedition of the Earl of Essex in Ireland, 1599.	Battle of Ivry, 1590. Edict of Nantes, 1598.

1590–1600	"Astrophel," 1595. "Amoretti" (sonnets), 1595. "Epithalamium," 1595. "Four Hymns," 1596. "Prothalamium," 1596. "A View of the Present State of Ireland," 1633. **Sir Philip Sidney,** 1554–1586. "Apology for Poetry," 1581, pr. 1595. "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," 1590. "Astrophel and Stella" (sonnet series), 1591. **Thomas Lodge,** 1558(?)–1625. "Rosalind," 1590. Other plays, poems, translations, and a "Defence of Stage Plays." **Henry Constable,** 1562–1613. "Spiritual Sonnets," 1590. "Diana," 1592. **Michael Drayton,** 1563–1631. "Sonnets." "Polyolbion," 1613, 1622. Etc. **Sir John Harrington,** 1561–1612. "Translation of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso," 1591. **Sir Walter Raleigh,** 1552–1618. "The Fight about the Isles of the Azores," 1591. "History of the World," 1614. Etc. **Samuel Daniel,** 1562–1619. "Delia" (sonnet series), 1592. "The Barons' Wars," 1595–1602. **William Shakespeare,** 1564–1616	**Cervantes.** "Don Quixote." Part I, 1605. Part II, 1615.	**Patent to East India Company,** 1600. **First Regular Poor Law,** 1601.	**Australia discovered,** 1601. **Dutch powerful in the Indies,** 1607.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1590–1600	**Richard Hooker,** 1553–1600. "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity": Bks. I–IV, 1594. Bk. V, 1597. Bks. VI–VIII, 1618. "Bacon's Essays," first edition, 1597. **George Chapman,** 1559(?)–1634. "Translation of Seven Books of the Iliad of Homer" (Bks. I–II, VII–XI), 1598.		Execution of Essex, 1601. James I of England and VI of Scotland, 1603–1625.	Moors expelled from Spain, 1609. Cape Horn discovered, 1615. Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648.
1600–1625	Bks. I–XII, 1610. Bks. XIII–XXIV, 1611. Plays, translations. **Ben Jonson,** 1573–1637. "Every Man in His Humour," 1598. "Cynthia's Revels," acted 1600. "Sejanus, His Fall," acted 1603. "Volpone," acted 1605. "The Alchemist," acted 1610. "Bartholomew Fair," acted 1614. "Masques" at court, 1603–1633. Etc. **Francis Bacon,** 1561–1626. "Essays," 1597, 1612, 1625. "Advancement of Learning," 1605. "Novum Organum," 1620. "New Atlantis," 1627; trans. 1629. Etc. **Thomas Dekker,** ab. 1570–1637, or later. "Old Fortunatus," 1600.			

1625–1650	"The Shoemaker's Holiday," 1600. Other plays. **Thomas Middleton,** 1570–1627. "A Trick to Catch the Old One," 1608. Other plays. **John Marston,** 1575(?)–1633. Plays. **Nicholas Breton,** 1554(?)–1624. (Pamphleteer and poet.) **Thomas Campion,** 1540–1623. "Art of English Poetry," 1602. "Lyrics." **Thomas Heywood,** 1581(?)–1640(?). "A Woman Killed with Kindness," acted 1603. Other plays. **John Stowe,** 1525(?)–1605. "Chronicles." **Francis Beaumont,** 1586(?)–1616. **John Fletcher,** 1579–1625. Plays perhaps composed together: "Philaster," acted 1608. "The Maid's Tragedy," acted ab. 1608, pr. 1619. "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," acted ab. 1610–1611. Other plays. Fletcher's Plays: "The Faithful Shepherdess," acted 1610. "Bonduca," acted bef. 1619. "Valentinian," acted bef. 1619. Other plays. **John Webster,** "The White Devil" ("Vittoria Corombona"), 1612.	**Galileo,** 1564–1642. **Hugo Grotius,** 1583–1645. The Elzevirs, 1583–1652. Makers of books.	**Parliament claims to deal with both Church and State,** 1604. **Gunpowder Plot,** 1605. **Bacon, Lord Keeper,** 1617. Discovery of Circulation of the blood, by William Harvey, 1619. First Puritan Emigration to America, 1620. First English Newspaper, 1622. First Edition of Shakespeare, 1623.	**Rubens (p),** 1577–1640. **Gustavus Adolphus,** r. 1611–1632. **Wallenstein,** 1583–1634.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1625–1650	"The Duchess of Malfi," acted 1616, pub. 1623. Etc. **Cyril Tourneur.** "The Revenger's Tragedy," 1607. "The Atheist's Tragedy," 1611. Etc. "Douay Translation of the Bible," 1609. **John Donne,** 1573–1631. "Poems." "Sermons." **Giles Fletcher,** ab. 1588–1623. "Christ's Victory and Triumph" (a poem), 1610. "Authorized Version of the Bible," 1611. **William Drummond of Hawthornden,** 1585–1649. "Poems." **Sir Thomas Overbury,** 1581–1613. "Characters," 1614. Etc. **William Browne,** 1590–1645. "Britannia's Pastorals," 1613–1616. Etc. **William Rowley.** Plays. **Robert Burton,** 1577–1640. "The Anatomy of Melancholy," 1621. **Philip Massinger,** 1584–1640. "The Virgin Martyr" (with Dekker), pr. 1622.	Hotel Rambouillet. French Academy founded, 1635. Corneille. "Le Cid," 1636.	Inigo Jones (a), 1572–1652. Charles I, 1625–1648. d. 1649. Buckingham assassinated, 1628. Petition of Right, 1628. Dr. Bull, ab. 1628. The National Anthem. Laud and Wentworth in power.	**Richelieu, supreme, 1624–1642.** **Jardin des Plantes (Paris), 1635.**

1625–1650	"The Maid of Honour," 1632. "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," 1633. Etc. **George Wither,** 1588–1667. "Satirical Essays," 1613. "Juvenilia," 1622. Etc. **Launcelot Andrewes,** Bishop of Winchester, 1555–1626. "Sermons," 1628, 1631. "Manual of Private Devotions," 1648. Etc. **Sir William Davenant,** 1606–1668. "The Cruel Brother," 1630. Etc. **Phineas Fletcher,** 1582–1650. "The Purple Island," 1633. Etc. **Abraham Cowley,** 1618–1667. "Poetical Blossoms," 1633. "Pindaric Odes," 1656. Etc. **George Herbert,** 1593–1633. "The Temple," 1631. Etc. **John Ford,** 1586–1640 or later. "The Broken Heart," 1633. Etc. **Francis Quarles,** 1592–1644. "Poems." **Sir John Denham,** 1615–1668. "The Sophy," acted 1641. "Cooper's Hill," 1642. **Thomas Carew,** 1598–1639(?). "Poems." **Richard Crashaw,** 1613(?)–1650(?). "Poems."	**Descartes.** "Discours de la Méthode," 1637. "Acta Sanctorum," begun by Bollandus, 1643.	Covenant in Scotland, 1638. Long Parliament, 1640. Star Chamber abolished, 1641. Execution of Strafford, 1641.	University of Utrecht, 1636. Louis XIV began to reign, 1643. Jesuits and Jansenists. Torricelli's Barometer, 1643.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1625–1650	Sir John Suckling, 1609–1641. "Poems." "Aglaura," acted 1637. Thomas Fuller, 1608–1661. "History of the Holy War," 1639–1651. "History of the Worthies of England," 1662. Etc. JOHN MILTON, 1608–1674. Sir Thomas Browne, 1605–1682. "Religio Medici," 1642, authorized edition, 1643. "Urn Burial," 1658. Etc. Edmund Waller, 1605–1687. "Poems." Henry Vaughan, 1622(?)–1695. "Silex Scintillans," 1650–1655. Etc. Robert Herrick, 1591–1674. "Hesperides and Noble Numbers," 1648. "Eikon Basilike," 1648. (Author unknown.) Sir Richard Lovelace, 1618–1658. "Lucasta," 1649. Jeremy Taylor, 1613–1667. "Holy Living," 1650. "Holy Dying," 1651. Etc.		Civil War, 1642–1651. Battle of Marston Moor, 1644. Battle of Naseby, 1645. Execution of Laud, 1645. Execution of the King, 1649.	Vandyck (p), 1599–1641.

1625–1660	**Richard Baxter,** 1615–1691. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," 1650. Etc. **Thomas Hobbes,** 1588–1679. "Leviathan, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth," 1651. Etc. **James Shirley,** 1596–1666. Plays. **Izaak Walton,** 1593–1683. "Lives," 1640–1678. "The Complete Angler," 1653. (Fifth edition, 1676.)	**Scudéry.** "Le Grand Cyrus," 1649.	**Cromwell, Protector,** 1653–1658.	**Peace of Westphalia,** 1648. **Velasquez (p),** 1599–1660. **Lettres de cachet.**

1. Elizabethan Dramatists:

John Lyly.	William Shakespeare.
Robert Greene.	Thomas Kyd.
George Peele.	Thomas Nash.
Christopher Marlowe.	Thomas Lodge.

Jacobean Dramatists:

George Chapman.	Philip Massinger.
Ben Jonson.	John Webster.
Thomas Dekker.	Cyril Tourneur.
Thomas Middleton.	William Rowley.
John Marston.	Sir William Davenant.
Thomas Heywood.	John Ford.
Francis Beaumont.	James Shirley.
John Fletcher.	

2. Sonneteers:

William Shakespeare.	Michael Drayton.
Sir Philip Sidney.	Henry Constable.
Edmund Spenser.	Samuel Daniel.

Lyrists:

Nicholas Breton.	Francis Quarles.
Thomas Campion.	Sir John Denham.*
John Donne.	Thomas Carew.*
Giles Fletcher.	Richard Crashaw.
William Drummond.*	Sir John Suckling.*
William Browne.	Edmund Waller.*
George Wither.	Henry Vaughan.
Phineas Fletcher.	Robert Herrick.
Abraham Cowley.*	Sir Richard Lovelace.*
George Herbert.	Sir William Davenant.*

The * indicates the so-called Cavalier poets.

3. Sir John Denham, Abraham Cowley, and Edmund Waller, although belonging chronologically to the later Renaissance, are prophetic of the formalism of the pseudo-classic age. They were already experimenting in forms which the eighteenth century was to perfect.

4. The period of literary greatness in France is now beginning.

CHAPTER XI

JOHN MILTON

THE men of the seventeenth century are singularly interesting, but as a rule, every man stands for one of the forces of that complex age. Milton towers above them all. He is the greatest spirit of the age, for he is the most comprehensive.

It is in times of spiritual transition that great imaginative leaders most often appear. They stand at a parting of the ways. If we gaze earnestly into their minds, we shall see there the past and the future meet. Such was the case with Dante, Chaucer, Spenser. But there is no English writer in whom more currents unite than in John Milton. In the quality of his imagination, and in his poetic art, especially through his early work, he is the last son of the Renaissance; in the whole body of his intellectual and moral convictions he is Republican and Puritan; in the character of his emotion, and in a certain sustained self-mastery and dignity of style, he foretells, especially through his later work, the coming revival of classical standards.

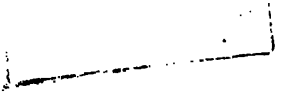
Two words sum up the temper of Milton's life and of his work: lofty purity. His life is a high romance; in reading of it, his own youthful words again and again recur to us: "My mind gave me," he wrote in 1642, "that every free and gentle spirit ought to be born a knight." "He who would



JOHN MILTON

1608-1674

After the painting by Faed from the print by Faithorne



not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem."

I. Milton's Life and Early Work

Milton's birth, 1608.

Milton was born in London, eight years before the death of Shakespeare. Compared with Shakespeare, he was a child of privilege and convention. His father was a Puritan gentleman in whom religious severity had not exiled the arts, in particular the art of music. Milton went to Cambridge University, where he spent seven years, and received, as befitted a young English gentleman, a scholar's training. He was very beautiful in his youth, and was given the nickname of "the lady of Christ's," his college, because of his curling long auburn hair and delicate face. Leaving the University a master of arts, he spent five years and nine months in retirement at his father's country home at Horton. Then he went to Italy, after the fashion of young men of the Renaissance, made many friends, saw the blind Galileo in his tower, and became at every point a courtly and accomplished gentleman.

Education and youth.

Cambridge, 1625–1632.

Italian journey, 1638–1639.

No fairer training can be imagined for a poet; and a poet Milton had already shown himself to be. In these years, before he was thirty years old, he had written that group of minor poems which would in themselves have set him above all other poets of his age. The most beautiful of these poems are: the "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," written while he was still at college; "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," companion pieces, breathing of his literary studies and rural wanderings at Horton; the two poems in

which the literary masque of the Renaissance passed away, glorified in its death, "Arcades," and more important, "Comus"; and "Lycidas," a pastoral elegy on the death of his college friend or acquaintance, Edward King.

Early minor poems.

The manner of the Renaissance reigns supreme in these poems; inspires the delicate fashioning of the verse, the quest for felicity of phrase, the pervading sense of art and beauty. Yet a temper more austere gives their sweetness strength, — the temper of high moral idealism, compelling and complete. We feel the rich sensuous equipment of the poet, we respond to his appeal to the eye, to the ear, to the imagination; but thrilling through all these, the soul of them all, is the clear call of the appeal to conscience. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are, for instance, quite unethical in purport. They are poems of youth; they express those fleeting moods of joy or pensiveness which seem to youth so fraught with significance. Yet even here it is a youth almost ascetic in the inmost trend of its nature, however sensitive to beauty, that speaks to us; we feel that Milton's feet are more at home pacing alone the dry smooth-shaven green, or the studious cloister's pale than in the haunts of innocent gayety.

In "Lycidas," Milton's great elegy, the double forces that at this time controlled his nature show in a way almost startling. It is, like most of the elegiac work so popular in the Renaissance, a polished piece of literary art, carefully based on classic models. But Edward King had been destined for the Church; and this fact wakens Milton's soul. He pours out his fiery indignation against ecclesi-

astical corruption in a famous passage. The harsh Hebraic and Puritan passion breaks with strange effect against the mellifluous classicism of the conventional pastoral strain; and only the serene and even dignity of Milton's marvellous style,—for already the gift is his to find the inevitable word,—reconciles us to the abrupt transition and carries us without shock from the one world into the other.

In "Comus," the most important poem of this period, we feel with especial clearness that we have entered a new imaginative region. The masque, presented before the Earl of Bridgewater at Ludlow Castle by his own children, shows us a lady separated from her two brothers and wandering lost in a wood. Deceived by the arts of an evil magician, Comus, son of Circe, she yet resists his spells and is finally found and rescued by her brothers, aided by an attendant spirit in the guise of a shepherd, and the river nymph, Sabrina. In the poetic presentment of this theme, we have the changing charm of beautiful landscape, of fair human figures, of dance and feast, of grotesque revel and pastoral sweetness; we have all this wedded to most melodious measures. But if we put "Comus" beside the masques of Jonson or Campion or the "Faithful Shepherdess" of Fletcher, we are amazed at the contrast; for here all arts of pleasing, present in perfection, are subordinate to another aim.

> "Mortals that would follow me,
> Love Virtue: she alone is free."

In these early poems, the style of Milton already shows its individual and choice distinction; a surety

of selective principle, a cool firmness of workmanship which the Renaissance rarely reached. Milton's youthful feet, like those of his compeers, strayed in fields full of blossoms; but theirs were the lush meadows of the lowlands, his the high pastures close beneath the everlasting snows. The light of the upper air is in the cool brilliance of the flowers he tenders us.

Political activities.

No man ever took his poetic vocation with more seriousness than Milton. He had consecrated himself to it in the spirit of a knight. Then came the call of an alien duty; and without hesitation his young manhood turned away from his chosen task, and leaped to this new labor.

He was still in Italy when the news of the breaking out of the Civil War reached him. Instantly he changed his plans, dropped his ties, and made his way homeward, to put himself at the service of his country. Through twenty years poetry was not for him. He was not needed on the battlefield; but he devoted his powers to the war of ideas by which, quite as much as by the fortunes of battle, the destinies of the time were decided. From 1649 to 1658 he was Latin Secretary to "Cromwell, our chief of men," as he addressed him in a noble sonnet. He held the office nominally till the Restoration.

Latin Secretary, 1649–1660.

Prose work.

We sigh when we think that we have from Milton only the poems of youth and of old age, not of his manly prime. The prose on which he lavished his efforts was, like most of the controversial prose of the day, acrid and harsh. He fought the foes of the Lord with any weapons that came to hand, whether abstract argument or personal abuse. The result is not pleas-

ant reading. Still, one looks at this prose with reverence; for it was all written in the cause of liberty, liberty political, civil, social. At times, Milton's true self and his great imagination broke forth, as in the "Areopagitica," his finest pamphlet, which was written in defence of intellectual liberty, the freedom of the press.

Private life.

Milton had married during these years, unhappily and hastily it seems, a young girl of a Royalist family. After a separation and reunion, she died, leaving him three daughters, and some time later he married again a woman whom he tenderly loved. She was shortly taken from him, and he mourned her loss in a sonnet of exceeding beauty. The one poetic legacy of these years, indeed, is a series of sonnets. They are personal outbursts inspired by passing events, usually political. Milton uplifted the sonnet to the uses of patriotism: —

Sonnets.

> "In his hand
> The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains, alas! too few." [1]

His sonnets were written in a manner of his own; with the Italian rhyme-scheme, but frequently with no break between the octave and the sestet.

One of these sonnets tells us with high and beautiful pathos of the final sacrifice that Milton laid upon the altar of his country's freedom. It was the sacrifice of his sight. For in 1652 Milton became blind. He had overstrained his delicate eyesight in the hasty composition of a pamphlet which he thought it his immediate duty to write. At times he was con-

[1] Wordsworth: "Scorn not the sonnet."

sumed under his affliction with restless pain, even with self-reproach, at the thought of "that one talent which is death to hide lodged with me useless;" but he was comforted by the thought: "God doth not need either man's work or his own gifts; — they also serve who only stand and wait," and also by the consciousness that his eyes had been lost "in Liberty's defence, my noble task." We can see that he bore his deprivation with magnanimity and faith.

Later years.

But a worse evil than loss of sight was to befall his spirit. After the death of Cromwell, that religious republic for which Milton had given eyesight and the best years of his life crumbled and fell. The nation abjured Puritanism; a corrupt Stuart returned to power. Blind, lonely, sad, Milton lived on into the days of the Restoration; and then it was, while Charles and his courtiers revelled in coarse gayety, like Comus and his crew, that Milton lifted up his soul into a lofty calm, and unsealed the eyes of his spirit to behold the counsels of the Most High, the vast shades of Pandemonium, and the vision of an unfallen humanity dwelling on an earth unblighted.

II. "Paradise Lost"

Pub. 1667.

The "Paradise Lost" was the work of Milton's later years. He wrote it between 1658 and 1665. We like to think of the solitary man, sitting in his eternal darkness, listening to the harmonies which the Muse, he tells us, nightly whispered in his ear. Milton had always meant to write a great poem. In his youth he had dallied with the subject of the national hero, King Arthur; we do not wonder that

he changed his plan, and we see how only the theme of "Paradise Lost" could satisfy the sorrowful Puritan, fallen on evil days and evil tongues.

Perhaps no one reading the great poem is likely to regret the choice; yet the defects of the subject for epic treatment are obvious. It is doubtful at the outset whether a great heroic epic can ever be written save in the childhood of the race, though the way is always open to a romantic narrative like Spenser's. "Paradise Lost," moreover, has a technical defect; there is no hero. Is Adam the hero? He is quite too passive, acting in one point alone, where he yields to the temptation offered by the serpent through the woman. Messiah has been called the protagonist; but not all Milton's glorious verse can reconcile us to this Personality who discusses theology with the Eternal Father, and in harsh warfare drives the rebel angels over the battlements of Heaven. Remains the Devil; and, despite all arguments to the contrary, he is surely the figure on whom our interest centres, and who gathers to himself the sympathy of our impulse, though not of our conviction. Milton the republican let his imagination play fascinated on this mightiest of rebels from an autocratic Power, though Milton the theologian doomed him to an eternity of crime and withering woe.

But there is a deeper criticism to be passed on "Paradise Lost"; it is impossible to handle the Scriptures imaginatively in such a way as to satisfy many generations. The mysterious Story of the Fall in Genesis comes to us out of the solemn twilight of the first morning of the race; to take that great Story into the hard light of a weary noon, to

translate it into the theological terms of one's own time, is audacious and unwise. There is little resemblance between the version in Genesis and the elaborated epic of Milton. To apprehend the poem aright, we must disregard its relation to the Scriptures, and regard it simply as what it is, a stupendous imaginative invention.

Even from this point of view it has its disappointments. Milton's Heaven is a dull country, too definitely laid out. He imparts to us no sense of the mystery of spiritual things as Dante does; nor does he give us the sense which Dante so solemnly imparts of the holiness of the Most High. His treatment of Heaven is anthropomorphic, not symbolic; hence it is open to the charge of irreverence.

But detraction is poor business in the presence of one of the great poems of the English tongue. Remembering the work of Cædmon, so strangely prophetic, we can believe that the impulse to create an epic on this theme was due to no temporary causes, but was deep-rooted in the race. What other theme could be so mighty? All epic lives by the consciousness of battle; where else is a battle like this, — the contest of the forces of eternal good and undying evil for victory over the human race? If Milton's treatment of the Divine seems to dwarf infinitude, no conception was ever grander than that presented by his poem of the rebel hosts, and of Lucifer, who leads them with "faded splendor wan." Dante's devil sticks in the centre of the world, grotesque, earth-bound, the very concrete incarnation of impotent Death. Milton's, less logical it may be as an impersonation of evil, is far more

magnificent. He convenes his vast demon hosts, finely conceived as the false gods of the nations to be; or wings his way through the profound gulfs of Chaos; or pours forth his agony in the marvellous soliloquy on Mount Niphates, — and all with dignity unimpaired. Powerful is the study of his faint compunctions — for at the outset much of the archangel yet lingers in him — and of the final Doom, when, the deed accomplished and the ruin of man achieved, he returns to his gloomy shades.

Nor would one ignore the lovely descriptions of the "bowery loneliness" of Eden, nor the splendid picturing of the angels. Not mystically fair like the significant spiritual presences in Dante, these angels are yet glorious creatures; one feels in them the dying effort of the opulent imagination of the Renaissance to conceive supreme beauty. And it would be hard to dwell too much on the sweep and scope of the intellectual conception of the poem, moving logically as it does from creation to redemption.

All this great action is presented in uplifted verse which it would be an impertinence to praise. No one has ever drawn from blank verse the deep inward music of Milton. Tennyson's words are best about it: —

> "O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
> O skilled to sing of time or eternity,
> God-gifted organ-voice of England,
> Milton, a name to resound for ages!"

III. Last Work and Death

"Paradise Regained," 1671.

Milton did not stop writing with "Paradise Lost"; and we are glad that his spirit did not pause with considering temptation victorious over Eve, but went on to consider temptation conquered by Christ. But the poetry of the "Paradise Regained" has never held men, like the "Paradise Lost." One more great and worthy poem the old man was to write, however — "Samson Agonistes." We feel that no subject could have expressed with a nobler pathos the mood of his latter days. Righteousness is worsted, humbled, in the toils; yet dying it conquers, and the victory of faith is assured. In art, the poem like "Lycidas," is the offspring of the mingled Hebraic and Hellenic elements in Milton's nature; for the Old Testament story is treated like a Greek tragedy. But the two elements are fused at last, and are no longer, as in "Lycidas," in sharp and questionable juxtaposition. The drama has been called the last expression of the noble dramatic impulse in the England of the Renaissance; it has been compared to a fortress rock, the last outpost of a chain of Alpine heights, standing alone in its plain.

"Samson Agonistes," 1671.

Milton's death, 1674.

"Samson Agonistes" was probably written after 1667; Milton lived till 1674. Then his great and pure spirit passed into that unseen world where his imagination had loved to dwell.

REFERENCE BOOKS

David Masson, The Life of John Milton; also standard edition, in three volumes, of Milton's works. J. H. B. Masterman, The Age of Milton. Stopford Brooke, Milton. Life, by Richard Garnett, Great Writers Series. Life,

by MARK PATTISON, English Men of Letters. Life, by DR. JOHNSON, in his Lives of the Poets. MASSON'S Three Devils; Luther's, Milton's, and Goethe's. Essays on Milton, by MACAULAY; EDMOND SCHERER, in Essays on English Literature; MATTHEW ARNOLD, in Essays in Criticism, Series II; and EDWARD DOWDEN, Transcripts and Studies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Close, line by line, analysis of the minor poems of Milton is one of the best means English literature affords for training the ear to appreciation of lyrical beauty, and the mind to the understanding of poetic expression. Study of metrical structure, of choice of epithet, of metaphor, of pause melody, etc., should be as full as time allows. Recitations in class should be encouraged, and "Lycidas," "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," made permanent possessions.

"Paradise Lost" may be read more rapidly, though the power of the blank verse should be brought home to the student in every possible way. But substance should here engage as much attention as style. The portions of the poem referring to Satan always prove most stirring to a class, and the great character should be studied stage by stage, in its majesty, in its pathos, in its terrible moral decline.

Special studies may, of course, be given to great advantage by advanced students on such topics as The Greek Elegies on which "Lycidas" is founded, Milton's Possible Debt to Cædmon, Milton's Sonnet Structure, Milton's Treatment of the Gods of the Ancient World compared with Spenser's, etc.

But the student must clearly feel that the work on Milton in any general course is only an introduction to what deserves lifelong study.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The comparisons with Dante suggested in the text may well be carried further. Since few classes can read the "Paradise Lost" through, lectures on the poem as a whole, with readings, and presentation of the intellectual scheme and structure, are very desirable. Lectures on the political history of the times, with special references to the Puritan type of character, are also helpful.

MILTON'S LIFE AND WORKS

Year	Life and Works	General English History	Literary History
1608	Milton born. Lived in his father's house in London for sixteen years.	Fifth year of James I's reign. First permanent English settlement in America.	"King Lear" published. Thomas Fuller born.
1611			Authorized Version of Bible.
1612			Samuel Butler born.
1613			Jeremy Taylor born.
1615			Richard Baxter born.
1616			Shakespeare and Beaumont died.
1618			Abraham Cowley born.
1619			Ben Jonson poet laureate.
1620	St. Paul's School.	First Puritan emigration to America.	
1622			Henry Vaughan born.
1623			The First Folio of Shakespeare published. Fletcher died.
1625	Cambridge.	Charles I, king.	
1626	"On a Fair Infant."		Bacon and Andrewes died.
1628	"Vacation Exercise."	Laud, bishop of London.	John Bunyan born.
1629	B. A. "Nativity Ode."	Charles dissolves his third Parliament. No new Parliament until 1640.	
1630	"The Circumcision." "On Time." "At a Solemn Music." "Epitaph on Shakespeare."		
1631	"Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester." "Song on May Morning."		Drayton and Donne died. Dryden born.
1632	M. A., Cambridge; Sonnet I.		John Locke born.

Year	Life and Works	General English History	Literary History
1632	Beginning of six years at Horton. Sonnet II.		
1633	"Arcades" (perhaps 1631). "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" (at about this time).	Laud, archbishop of Canterbury.	George Herbert died.
1634	"Comus" acted.		George Chapman died.
1635	M. A., Oxford.		
1637	"Lycidas." "Comus" published.		Dekker and Ben Jonson died.
1638–39	Continental journey. "Italian Sonnets."	Discontent in England. War with Scotland.	
1639	To London. "Epitaphium Damonis."		
1639–40	First notes for "Paradise Lost."	Long Parliament (1640).	Ford and Massinger died.
1641–42	Controversial pamphlets on episcopacy and Church reform. Beginning of prose period of about 20 years. Sonnets and poetic translations throughout this period.	Execution of Strafford. Civil War. Battle of Edgehill.	Publication of Browne's "Religio Medici."
1643	First marriage.	Battles of Chalgrove and Newbury. Hampden and Pym died.	
1644–45	Tracts on "Divorce," "Education," and notably, the "Areopagitica" on the liberty of the press.	Battle of Marston Moor. Use of Prayer Book prohibited by Parliament. Laud executed. Battle of Naseby.	
1646	Collected edition of poems, English, Italian, and Latin.	Charles I surrenders to the Scots.	
1648		Second Civil War.	
1649	Latin Secretary. Political pamphlets, written at intervals.	Execution of Charles and of many of his adherents.	

Year	Life and Works	General English History	Literary History
1649		Abolition of monarchy and House of Lords by Parliament.	
1652	Milton became blind.		Webster died.
1653	Death of first wife.	Long Parliament dissolved. Protectorate.	
1656	Second marriage.		
1657	Andrew Marvell ass't secretary.		
1658	Death of second wife.	Death of Cromwell.	
1660		The Restoration.	
1661			
1664	Third marriage.		Fuller died.
1665		Great Plague.	
1666		Great Fire of London.	
1667	"Paradise Lost" published: the writing, except for earlier notes, begun in 1658, and completed at latest in 1665. Publication delayed by Great Plague and Fire.		Cowley and Taylor died. Swift born. Several of Dryden's works appeared.
1669	"History of England."		
1671	"Paradise Regained" published: begun probably in 1665, finished in 1666. "Samson Agonistes" published, written probably after 1667.		Steele born.
1672	"Artis Logicæ."		Addison born.
1673	"Of True Religion, Heresy, and Schism."		
1674	Milton died.		
1824 or 1825	"Treatise on Christian Doctrine" discovered and published: written after the Restoration.		

CHAPTER XII

THE LITERATURE OF PURITANISM

THIS will be a short chapter. Puritanism could be a potent factor in a great genius like Milton's, but left to itself it did not produce much literature. It had other ways of manifesting itself, and its importance in seventeenth-century England is out of all proportion to its literary product.

The Puritan was the result of an entirely necessary reaction from the revel of the senses that marked the later Renaissance. In the sixteenth century the Renaissance and the Reformation blended harmoniously; in the seventeenth, they sprang apart. The Puritan was the child of the Reformation alone, and the Reformation carried to an extreme. He was unaffected by the sweetness and light, the love of learning and beauty, in a word the Hellenism of the Renaissance; he turned aside from it with scorn and hate, nourished himself on one Book only, though that the greatest, and became Hebraic in every fibre. He gave strange Scriptural names to his children; his conversation was a curious medley of Scriptural phrases. He had a noble moral strength, but he was often unlovely in aspect and manner, and intolerant and narrow. He enjoyed theological abstractions, and was always trying to "justify the ways of God to man." His asceticism was of a different type from that of the middle

ages; less compatible with the free play of the imagination, which likes images better than abstractions, more distrustful of beauty and of all that gives life charm.

I. Puritan Literature

It is easy to look at the unpleasant aspects of the great forces that were pulling men toward this world and away from it. We have seen the riot of sensuousness in the worldly literature of the Renaissance; on the other hand, Puritanism presents us with a literature often marked by an insufferable asperity. The mere titles of some of the Puritan tracts for the times illustrate this temper: "A Pleasant Purge for a Roman Catholic," "The Unloveliness of Lovelocks," "Sighs from Hell," "A Declaration of the Vile and Wicked Waies of the Cruell Cavaliers."

Its weakness.

Its strength.

Puritanism militant is not attractive. But when we turn away from the Puritanism that was fighting the ungodly world, to the Puritanism that was seeking with solemn consecration of mind and spirit for personal holiness, we enter into the secret strength of the great Power in which our own Republic was founded, and bow in reverence before it. Of the deep spiritual fervor, of the passion for freedom, of the intellectual force, which showed themselves in Puritan character and theology, English literature, strictly speaking, holds no full expression. That expression is found in confessions of faith, and institutions which, even though they be partially outgrown, must remain a monument to one of the most

strenuous and impressive efforts ever made by the human race to uplift itself into the comprehension of the nature and the will of God. When we think what the real aim of the Puritans was, all criticism dwindles, and we cease to wonder at their indifference to beauty.

Richard Baxter, 1615–1691. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," 1650.

One does not turn to the religious books which Puritanism copiously produced for the joy which art must engender. Now and then, however, one of these books becomes literature. Such a book is Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest." It is written with an ardor, a purity, an eloquence, which give it an enduring hold on the hearts of men.

John Bunyan, 1628–1688. "The Pilgrim's Progress," 1678–1684.

But there is one book in which all the harshness of Puritanism is turned to fragrance; a book which is still cherished next to the Bible by thousands of simple folk. This is Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." It is the only book, missionaries tell us, apart from the Bible, which bears translation without change into Oriental languages and reaches the heathen peoples with instant appeal. We put it in our thought beside the poems of Milton, when we wish to sum up the contribution of Puritanism to letters.

The "Pilgrim's Progress" is the work, if not of an unlettered, at least of an uncultured man. There is absolutely no trace in it of the humanizing influences of the Renaissance, of love of classical learning, or of ornament for its own sake. One influence, and one alone, has formed its style and thought and imagery — the influence of the Bible. Yet it is as intensely imaginative a work as the English genius ever produced. It is the great symbolic romance of

the seventeenth century, and bears the same relation to Puritanism that Langland's poem bears to the middle ages, and Spenser's to the Renaissance. In spirit, it reminds us more of Langland than of Spenser. But Bunyan differs from both Langland and Spenser in that he cares not one whit what may happen to the world around him. That is given over to the devil; the duty of the Pilgrim is with eternity and his own soul alone.

The book is a book of the plain people, not, like so much of the literature of the Renaissance, a book of the aristocracy. The immense influence of Puritanism in preparing the way for democracy is evident in it. Christian, the hero, is no courtly knight; he is a simple burgher of the middle class, a pedler with a pack on his back. His journey is a spiritual one, as he flees from the City of Destruction, and plods his weary way toward the heavenly Jerusalem; but it is through seventeenth-century England that he passes, along its dusty, narrow roads, through its wicket gates, past its sweet meadows, its turnstiles, its country places, its occasional feudal castles, where the giants of the old romances might still well abide. The life of that middle class, which was just rising into prominence in the seventeenth century, is nowhere so graphically pictured for us as in the "Pilgrim's Progress."

Of the depth of spiritual experience shown in the book, one does not need to speak. Its theology has some elements not universal nor permanent, but its faith springs deep from the heart of Christendom, and will speak to that heart as long as there is any reality left to belief in God's love and in His justice,



JOHN BUNYAN
1628-1688



in the mystery of sin and the mystery of redemption. It is a stern book. It starts with the watchword, "Flee from the wrath to come," and the path of the fleeing Pilgrim is beset with many perils vividly described; yet it has at times an exquisite tenderness and beauty. Of the style it is enough to say that it is not unworthy of its model, the English Bible. Bunyan gave Puritan England what it needed: a book expressing, not the theology and intellectual conceptions which Milton had so nobly rendered, but the secrets of its hidden life.

The book was begun in Bedford jail, where Bunyan spent twelve years of his life. He had been a tinker; but after his conversion he became an itinerant preacher, and was imprisoned under the Restoration because he would not give up his delivery of his message. Bunyan wrote other books besides the "Pilgrim's Progress." The finest of these are: "Grace Abounding," the autobiography of his spiritual life, a book of singularly naïve power and candor; "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman," a grim bit of realistic fiction, almost in the manner of Defoe; and "The Holy War," an allegory which would be thought very fine had not the greater allegory overshadowed it. All these books are the work of a man of genius, all show Puritan faith at white heat; yet Bunyan lives by the one book, "The Pilgrim's Progress."

"Grace Abounding," 1666.

"Life and Death of Mr. Badman," 1680.

Bunyan was twenty years younger than Milton, and he lived till 1688. "The Pilgrim's Progress" was published in 1678, four years after Milton's death. By this time the Restoration was in full possession; a spirit wholly new had taken possession

of art and letters. That new spirit we must take a new book to describe.

II. Satires on Puritanism

It is no wonder if some of the most vivid literature that Puritanism called forth was in the line of antagonistic satire. The facile, graceful, gallant cavaliers attached to the court, their brilliant personality still irradiated by the sunshine of the Renaissance, were incapable of appreciating the religious strenuousness and intellectual force of the Puritan. They cared nothing for his devotion to the cause of freedom of conscience. To them he seemed simply irritating and absurd; and all through the seventeenth century are to be found caricatures of Puritanism. Some of these are very amusing. Such are certain sketches by Sir Thomas Overbury, in his book of "Characters," written early in the century; such are Ben Jonson's irresistible pictures of the sanctimonious Brethren in "The Alchemist," or of Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy, in "Bartholomew Fair." Urged by a group of the faithful to visit the riotous delights of the Fair, nay to eat roast pig therein, the Rabbi snuffles: —

Overbury, "Characters," 1614.

Jonson, "The Alchemist," 1610.

"Bartholomew Fair," 1614.

> In the way of comfort to the weak, I will go and eat. I will eat exceedingly, and prophesy. . . ."[1]

Having accordingly gone, and eaten exceedingly, the Rabbi is forthwith seized with a saintly wrath against the merriment of the Fair, and kicks over the pedler's basket of gingerbread; and in the racket

[1] "Bartholomew Fair," Act I, Scene I.

that ensues, his voice is loudest of all as he bellows to the officer who seeks to stop his noise, —

"Thou canst not: 'tis a sanctified noise. I will make a loud and a strong noise, till I have daunted the profane enemy."[1]

Butler, "Hudibras," 1663–1678.

Another satirical picture of Puritanism, more famous, and even more unjust, is that given by Butler, in his "Hudibras," a curious, clever, doggerel poem, in octosyllabic couplets, written toward the end of the century, when the Puritans had proved themselves vigorous fighters. He laughs at the Puritans as sanctimonious prigs, and pictures them as argumentative, wrong-headed, quarrelsome people who

"With more care keep holy-day
The wrong, than others the right way,
Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to:
Still so perverse and opposite
As if they worshipped God for spite.

* * * * * *

Rather than fail, they will defy
That which they love most tenderly,
Quarrel with minced-pies, and disparage
Their best and dearest friend, — plum-porridge:
Fat pig, and goose itself, oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the nose."[2]

His poem had an immense vogue; but the picture is so overdrawn as to be ridiculous, and in some respects it is wholly false.

[1] Act III, Scene I.
[2] "Hudibras," Part I, Canto I.

REFERENCE BOOKS

BUTLER'S Hudibras, over which an entertaining hour may be spent, is in MORLEY'S Universal Library. Selections in WARD. Editions of the "Pilgrim's Progress" are too numerous to mention. "Grace Abounding" is in the Clarendon Press edition. Lives of Bunyan are by J. A. FROUDE (English Men of Letters) and EDMUND VENABLES (Great Writers). J. TULLOCH, English Puritanism and its Leaders: Cromwell, Milton, Baxter, Bunyan. MACAULAY'S Essay on Milton gives a famous panegyric on the Puritan, while MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his "Literature and Dogma," and "Culture and Anarchy," discusses the Puritan type from a less favorable point of view.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Study the influence of the Bible on Bunyan's style. What did he gain, what lose, by being an ignorant man? Compare his allegory in some detail with that of Spenser, of Langland. Describe seventeenth-century England as it is seen in his book.



PART IV

THE AGE OF PROSE

CHAPTER I

THE CHANGE IN TASTE

I. The New Temper

IMAGINATION and passion had been the great forces that governed English literature from the beginning. Other forces had, to be sure, been coöperating with these during the last one hundred and fifty years: the desire for facts, such as we see illustrated in the works of Bacon; the desire for definite principles in art, such as we see in the works of Jonson. But these instincts, though present, had been subordinate. It was the romantic temper that produced Arthurian romance, the works of Chaucer, the "Faerie Queene," and, blending with the knowledge of experience, the dramas of Shakespeare.

The romantic temper loves freedom; it loves variety. It works best under excitement; it is in a constant attitude of expectant wonder. It loves beauty, too, but beauty, as has well been said, touched with strangeness. This temper, indulged without restraint, had led to strange excesses; and it came to pass in time that men wearied of it. The seventeenth century had been full of sensations; we have been able only to hint at its violent extremes. Now a great reaction set in. People were exhausted by all these shocks. They did not want to press into new regions of thought and emotion; they wanted

to understand what they had, to tabulate, to arrange. They craved uniformity, placidity, monotony even. Imagination and passion, both a little weary, withdrew from sight into the inmost recesses of men's natures; withdrew so far that they seemed lost forever. Reason and intelligence — salutary powers always, essential at that juncture — assumed exclusive command. A love of science arose, illustrated by the foundation, in 1660, of the Royal Society, the purpose of which was the investigation of natural phenomena. And prose, which had always led a subordinate, though an increasingly distinct, existence, became before long the dominant form of art.

Rise of prose.

II. Periods of the Age of Prose

This Age of Prose in English literature is often called the Classical Age. The reason is that people at this time first began to read the classic authors, not so much with the childlike delight of the Renaissance in the discovery of a new world of beauty and wisdom, but with the aim of imitation. The theory was followed that to copy the ancients was the one goal of modern art. Moreover, there were certain points of real affinity between the Greek and Roman temper, especially the Roman, and the temper of the eighteenth century. The distaste for mystery, the stress placed on reason, sanity, and clearness of thought, the desire for law and order rather than for freedom and variety, are all real marks of the classic spirit as distinguished from the romantic. At the same time, it is an obvious misnomer to apply

to the work of Pope and Dryden the same adjective that one applies to Homer and Æschylus and Virgil. If we use the term "classic" at all, we should put a modifying adverb before it, and call this the Pseudo-Classic Age. But the term, Age of Prose, seems, all things considered, more satisfactory.

Whatever we call the period, it is an absolutely distinct one. It lasted about one hundred and twenty-five years, and it falls naturally into three divisions: —

The Age of Dryden.

1660–1702. The first division opens with the Restoration. It was the Stuart dynasty that was restored, though before the period was over the Revolution of 1688 placed William of Orange, who had married a Stuart princess, on the throne. In literary study, we may most conveniently remember this as the Age of Dryden; for Dryden was the commanding man of letters of the time. He wrote both poetry and prose, and his prose was at least as significant as his poetry.

The Age of Pope and Swift.

1702–1744. The first part of this period is most conveniently named from the reigning monarch, the Age of Queen Anne. In 1714, the House of Hanover was established on the throne. No one author dominated the world of letters. Pope (d. 1744) was the most notable writer of verse, but the prose essayists, especially Addison and Swift, were yet more representative.

The Age of Johnson.

1744–1789. During this period, the Georges, dull and unpicturesque monarchs, continued to reign. The end coincides with no event in English history, but with the Fall of the Bastille in France. In literature, the period was dominated by the massive

figure of Samuel Johnson. Johnson is remembered almost solely as a prose writer. By 1789 America was a free country and the modern world was born.

III. Characteristics of the Age of Prose

Illustrations of taste.

The best way to realize the change in taste that marks this period is through illustrations. A cursory examination of the books of the time shows what words were in the ascendant. "Admirable," judicious," "elegant," "graceful," "polite," are the favorite adjectives; "enthusiastic" is a frequent term of reproach. We hear of "invention," of "imitation"; of passion or imagination never. "Nature" is a term often invoked; but, to use the words of Pope, "'tis nature still, but nature methodized." Above all, "wit," by which men then meant cleverness and intelligence, is the word that recurs a dozen times on every page, the final summary of all that seems most desirable in life and art. To chase this word through eighteenth-century literature is perhaps as good a way as can be found of feeling the prevailing instinct of the age. Another good way is to note the attitude of the time toward the great poets of earlier ages, the Masters of Romance.

This is easy to do, especially in Dryden's time; for that vigorous writer set to work to improve both Shakespeare and Milton.

Dryden on Milton.

Milton was of course Dryden's contemporary; and the new writer, in the flush of popularity, asked the blind neglected bard for permission to turn "Paradise Lost" into an opera. We may imagine the state of mind with which Milton consented. Dry-

den did the thing. He translated Milton's organ verse into neatly turned rhymed couplets; he arranged the whole poem, or the leading portions of it, in operatic scenes. A specimen will suffice. Adam, fresh from the hand of the Creator, awakens upon a flowery bank. He wonders at himself, but proceeds to argue his own existence, — "I think, therefore I am," with Cartesian precision; then, looking about him, immediately exclaims, "How full of ornament is all I view . . . in this well-ordered scene." Presently, we find ourselves in the presence of Eve, coquetting with her reflection in a fountain. Adam draws near, and wooes her with due decorum of compliments; she is inclined to him, yet, with inimitable instinct for the etiquette of the occasion, murmurs: —

> "Some restraining thought, I know not why,
> Tells me you long should beg, I long deny."

If, even with Milton, we hardly felt ourselves in the actual presence of primitive humanity, where are we now?

But the opera found warm admirers; and certain instructive verses by one of these are after the fashion of the times prefixed to it: —

"For Milton did the wealthy mine disclose,
And rudely cast what you could well dispose.
* * * * * *
He first beheld the beauteous rustic maid,
And to a place of strength the prize conveyed:
You took her thence; to Court this virgin brought,
Drest her with gems, new-weaved her hard-spun thought
And softest language, sweetest manners taught." [1]

[1] Nathaniel Lee, the dramatist.

Exactly! And Milton's muse, brought to the court of Charles II, is a noteworthy object indeed.

Dryden on Shakespeare.

Equally suggestive was the treatment of Shakespeare. Dryden rewrote two of Shakespeare's plays; "Antony and Cleopatra," which he shaped into the strongest of his own dramas, and renamed, "All for Love"; and the "Tempest," which he manipulated in collaboration with a minor dramatist of the time, Sir William Davenant. Let us see what they made of that most magical, mystical, and profound of plays. But a glance at the scenery is enough; the curtain rises on "Three walks of cypress trees; each side walk leads to a cave, in one of which Prospero keeps his daughters, in the other Hippolito. The middle walk is of great depth and leads to an open part of the island." As implied, here, Miranda has been supplied with a twin sister; and, to provide two pair of lovers, the happy thought occurred of matching the girl who had never seen a man with a man who had never seen a woman. This is Hippolito, who, although confined in an adjacent cave for twenty years, has never laid eyes upon his fair fellow-islanders. Not content with this, Caliban is presented with a twin sister named Sycorax, and Ariel has "a gentle spirit" called Milcha "for his love." Surely the passion for symmetry could no farther go.

Addison on Chaucer and Spenser.

A little later, we find a boyish poem of Addison, on "the Muse-possessed," valuable because it reflects the taste of his day, though for no other reason. This is how it speaks of Chaucer and Spenser: —

> "But age has rusted what the poet writ,
> Worn out his language, and obscured his wit.

In vain he jests in his unpolished strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.
Old Spenser next, warmed with poetic rage,
In ancient tales amused a barb'rous age,

* * * * *

But now the mystic tale, that pleased of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more."

We may conclude these illustrations of the taste of the age of prose by a quotation of a critic of some repute in his day, Thomas Rymer. "In the neighing of a horse," says Rymer, "or in the growling of a mastiff, there is more meaning, there is as lively expression, and may I say more humanity, than many times in the tragical flights of Shakespeare."

The worth of the new temper.

We must not think that this was a stupid period. Not at all; it was an age of unusual cleverness. The very awakening of the critical instinct, whatever blunders accompanied it at first, was in itself a most important fact. Once before, at the beginning of the Elizabethan age, this instinct had stirred faintly; but it had shrunk back, overborne by the great tide of creative energy. Now, the day was its own, and it did an essential work. Fortunately, English life was not to be stirred again till the end of the eighteenth century by any great or searching struggle, and in the comparative quietude people were to enter into fuller self-knowledge and fuller mastery over the means of expression. Emphasis was to change from substance to style; correctness was to be more sought than originality. If the resultant literature seems a little tame to us, we must remember that to seek positive standards of excellence in style is a quest of high importance.

It is a task that could only be attempted when passion burned low; to watch the stages of its accomplishment is an occupation full of interest.

The influence of France.

The foreign influence under which this work was carried on, was, next to the classics, the literature of France. During the Renaissance, from the days of Chaucer, indeed until the days of Ford, England had turned for inspiration to Italy. Next to Italy, Spain had been in most vital relations with her. Now all this was changed. It was still a Latin race which was, during the next hundred years, to affect her most profoundly, but a race in which the instincts of logic were stronger than those of imagination, a race always marked by a subtle feeling for perfection of form. The seventeenth century was, we must remember, the blossoming time of French literature; the age of Molière and Corneille and Racine, of Bossuet, of Boileau. It is easy to exaggerate the direct influence which the French had over English letters; but a strong connection is indisputable, from the time when the court of Charles II returned from France, to the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century.

REFERENCE BOOKS

General authorities for the Age of Prose: Gosse, From Shakespeare to Pope (traces the gradual change in taste through the seventeenth century); Eighteenth Century Literature. Perry, Eighteenth Century Literature. Taine, Bk. III. Saintsbury, Short History of English Literature, Bks. VIII and IX. W. C. Sydney, Social Life in England from the Restoration to the Revolution; England and the English in the Eighteenth Century. Lecky, History of England in the

Eighteenth Century. LESLIE STEPHEN, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century. See MACAULAY'S History of England, Vol. I, Ch. III, for famous description of the condition of England on the accession of Charles II.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The best way to make the change in taste vivid is to bring short, sharply contrasted passages from the romantic and the Augustan literatures before the class for analysis. For instance, Spenser's description of Belphœbe, "Faerie Queene," Bk. II, Canto III, may be compared with Pope's description of Belinda in the "Rape of the Lock"; the description of the voyage of Cleopatra in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" may be set against that given by Dryden in "All for Love." A satirical portrait like Dryden's Zimri or Achitophel, or Pope's Atticus, may be compared with Shakespeare's presentation of Henry V or Macbeth, and a general discussion may be aroused on the new point of view, and new method in studying human life, signified by the rise of satire. In prose, single sentences from Milton or Browne or Jeremy Taylor should be opposed to brief passages from Dryden or Addison. The more detailed this work is, the more instructive it will be found, and after an introductory drill of this kind the student can go on quietly and intelligently with the study of the consecutive literary history and the chief personalities of the time.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The brief treatment in the text could well be supplemented, if time permits, by a study of the gradual approach of the classical spirit and the first attempts in the new style in Waller, Cowley, etc. A lecture on the seventeenth-century literature of France in its relation to that of England would also be useful.

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

I. Revival of Classicism

IT would be interesting, had we time, to go back and trace the beginning of the new impulse. The men in whom it appeared were minor writers, but significant ones. The chief were Edmund Waller, who as early as 1623 was writing heroic couplets as even as Pope's, and Sir John Denham, who published in 1642 a dull topographical poem, "Cooper's Hill," in couplets of the new cadence. Two very interesting men, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvell, seem in parts of their work belated Elizabethans, visited by flashes of living imagination, and at other times frigid though expert practitioners in the new fashion. Cowley produced, besides lyrics of the fantastic type of the later Renaissance, and couplets predicting the age of prose, a species of elaborated odes which he called Pindaric, which found many imitators. Marvell was Milton's secretary, a real poet at heart.

Edmund Waller, 1605–1687.

Sir John Denham, 1615–1668.

Abraham Cowley, 1618–1667.

Andrew Marvell, 1621–1678.

But no sooner had the gay court of Charles II returned to England, than the new spirit became wholly dominant. One man, of rare intellectual vigor, gave it the impetus that it long retained. This was John Dryden. He towered above all the

other writers of his age. It is better to spend our time on him than to discuss minor authors.

II. JOHN DRYDEN

Dryden was born in 1631, and grew up during stirring times. His family connections leaned to Puritanism, and his first poem was a lament on the death of Cromwell. But he did not mix his politics with ideals like the men of the preceding generation, and his next significant poem was a courtly welcome to Charles II, "Astræa Redux." He was about thirty years old at this time; twenty-three years younger than Milton. From now on he was an indefatigable and most versatile writer, and in variety of scope and vigor of handling his work thoroughly expresses the tastes, standards, interests, of his age. Yet if we put him in our minds between Pope and Shakespeare, we perceive that he is in a way a figure of transition. There is a rush, a fervor, an energy, about his work, which one does not find in the more highly polished writings of the next generation; we may discern in this the last stir of the retreating tide of life that marked the Renaissance. In the variety of forms which he attempted we note the same transition. Sometimes he presses into quite new modes of artistic expression; sometimes he clings to the old.

1631-1700.

Review of his work.

Discussion of his work.

During eighteen years Dryden worked chiefly as a dramatist and produced twenty-two plays. In 1642, at the outbreak of the Civil War, Puritanism had closed the theatres. Now the spirit of this world, returning to power, opened them again. Women

Dramatic period.

were introduced as actors for the first time, the ballet appeared, scenery was much developed; the old primitive traditions were replaced by the modern stage. Dryden catered to the lively hunger of a people dramatically starved for twenty years. The time arrived, however, when he wearied of drama, and abandoned it, until the Revolution which placed William and Mary on the throne so injured his prospects that he returned, for the sake of making money, to a little unimportant play-writing.

Work showing influence of the Renaissance.

Let us look at his plays. The next period was to discard drama almost altogether. Dryden wrote plays with a certain zest, but tried to write them by rule. He put a great deal of careful, energetic thinking upon the true principles of dramatic art.

Dramas. "The Wild Gallant," 1663. "The Indian Emperor," 1665. "The Conquest of Granada," 1670. "Aurengzebe," 1675. "All for Love," 1678.

He produced comedies, like "The Wild Gallant," and tragedies like "The Indian Emperor," "The Conquest of Granada," and "Aurengzebe." These plays were what is called Heroic. They were in rhymed couplets, and Dryden mastered his instrument upon them. But after a time he tired of couplets, and deliberately "disencumbered himself of rhyme," in "All for Love," his adaptation of "Antony and Cleopatra." Now the heroic plays try to handle the high themes of passion and action loved by the free drama of the Renaissance; but self-conscious art supplants impulse, invention rules instead of imagination, and violence is mistaken for intensity. The result is a cold absurdity such as the most extreme of the Jacobean dramatists was never guilty of. We feel that the whole thing is reasoned out beforehand; and, indeed, the inveterate habit of dispute invades even the most impassioned moments: —

"Have I not answered all you can invent,
Even the least shadow of an argument?"

queries a distracted lover of his lady in the crisis of his fate. The Duke of Buckingham wrote a parody of heroic plays, called "The Rehearsal," which is still one of the most entertaining things in English literature. It practically killed them.

Lyrics. "Annus Mirabilis," 1667.

During his dramatic period Dryden had also been writing lyrics, and had produced one brilliant poem, the "Annus Mirabilis," inspired by contemporary politics and by the great fire of London. His affinity for the Renaissance is shown in the very fact that he wrote lyrics: for the next generation discarded lyrics with drama, and disliked all manipulation of verse except the heroic couplet. The "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" and that on Mrs. Anne Killigrew are his most famous lyrics, and they are fine things. Eloquence, rhetoric, studied workmanship, replace inspiration. These poems retain forever a place in English letters; but they are hardly the stuff of pure poetry.

Work of the new era.

In his remaining writings, Dryden advanced to his greatest success. He gave up reworking exhausted inspirations, and perfected with his strong and fertile mind new forms of expression, which delighted the world for over a century. Critical prose, satire, and didactic verse were distinctive art forms of the new era. Here Dryden's keen intelligence moved easily in the world familiar to him; making no effort to explore an ideal realm, or the kingdoms of romance, but contented with the artificial and polished society of the seventeenth century.

Prose criticism.

Dryden's prefaces to his plays are really more important than the plays themselves, for they mark the beginning of modern prose criticism. He is not a man who has strayed into prose by mistake, as we are tempted to think was the case with Milton or Sir Thomas Browne; he writes in this medium *con amore*. His prose possesses a freedom from inversions and involutions, a clarity of diction and sentence structure, such as we have not found before. It is full of strong common sense, and its sincere interest in literary matters is very pleasing. It is of no use to turn to Dryden, however, for any deep insight into critical principles. He goes as far as clear intelligence can carry him, but he has slight, if any, perception of the more elusive qualities that are out of the range of conscious invention and composition.

Satirical and didactic verse.

"Absalom and Achitophel," 1681.

"The Medal," 1682.

"MacFlecknoe," 1682.

Satires.

Dryden's splendid satires, "Absalom and Achitophel," "The Medal," and "MacFlecknoe," were called forth by the party politics and the literary dissensions of his day. A new kind of realism is found in them. It is not the Shakespearean kind, for it starts, not with sympathy, but with analysis, but it does dissect the tissues nearest the skin with amazing keenness. Every person sketched was unmistakable, and each one was defined by his greatest weakness. The workmanship of these poems was brilliant; it is still an intellectual joy to read the clear, scathing lines in which every word brings out into sharper relief the personality of Achitophel-Shaftesbury, or Zimri-Buckingham. There can be no question that contempt and distaste — the natural animus of satire — can carry one a certain distance in

the understanding of character; just how far, is matter for debate.

Equally clever were his argumentative poems. The first of these, "Religio Laici," is an argument for the Church of England. It sounds quite convincing, till one reads Dryden's other theological poem, "The Hind and the Panther," which is a yet abler plea for the Church of Rome. Dryden had become a Roman Catholic in 1686, on the accession of the Romanist king, James II, and there is something entertaining in the cheerful alacrity with which he argues for his new faith. Milton had died before these poems were written; one wonders what he would have thought of them. His religion had been cold and austere, but it controlled the inmost springs of life and conduct. Dryden's was a purely intellectual matter. It bore no relation to emotion or experience. Very likely, he was quite sincere in his change of church. If he was convinced of the truth of a set of arguments in favor of a new creed, he adopted them with no inward struggle. He saw no impropriety in presenting churches under the allegorical disguise of animals. We listen to the neatly turned couplets in which the beasts who represent the Roman and the Anglican Churches, the Hind and the Panther, discourse. We admire, and rub our eyes, wondering whether what is going on is actually a discussion of one of the most solemn themes in the whole world.

"Religio Laici," 1682.

"The Hind and the Panther," 1687.

Religious and didactic verse.

It is characteristic that some of Dryden's best work was in the form of translations. These show the lively interest in literary matters taken by the age. The time felt its own mission to be the work-

Translation.

ing over of material already accumulated into better and more correct form. Dryden's versions of Chaucer and Boccaccio contain some of his best writing. His most important work in this line was, however, his conscientious and praiseworthy translation of Virgil.

"Virgil," 1697.

"Fables, Ancient and Modern," 1700.

The handling of the measure, and in a way the conduct of the narrative, in these poems, is deserving of much praise. Like the greater part of Dryden's work, they are written in couplets; and here, as elsewhere, feeling the splendid ardor of movement, the "energy divine" of his verse, we understand the lines of Gray in the next century alluding to the couplet, where, putting Dryden next to Milton, he exclaims: —

Dryden's verse.

"Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed and loud resounding pace."

Resounding pace; vigor, clearness, sincerity, moderation, — these are the characteristics of the genius of Dryden. They are admirable qualities; they had been too much ignored, and were exactly what our literature at the time most needed. But they are the qualities of prose, and, although most of Dryden's work was in verse, it is as the inaugurator of the age of prose that he is most justly remembered.

In 1700 Dryden died. His private life had not been unhappy. He had been healthily and heartily pre-occupied with the interests of the visible world around him; for many years before his death he had held a commanding place in English letters, and

had been looked up to by the young writers of the rising generation somewhat as Ben Jonson had been in his day. He never suffered as Milton suffered; on the other hand, he possessed no world of ideal imaginings, such as Milton could withdraw into when he would.

III. Other Literature of the Restoration

Comedy.

We shall dwell but briefly on the other literature of this period. There was a strong dramatic development apart from Dryden; two tragedies of his contemporary, Thomas Otway, are still acted; but, so far at least as comedy was concerned, the less said about the drama the better. In the hands of Etherege, of Wycherley, of Congreve, of Farquhar, of Vanbrugh, it pandered to the very worst elements in the society of the time. It reflected with singular accuracy the fashionable world around; it scintillated with gayety, sprightly grace, and wit; it is forgotten. The Jacobean drama had been fearless in speech and theme to a degree intolerable to our modern ears and taste; but sincerity of passion and imaginative insight always kept it from being wholly ignoble. The comedy of the Restoration is dulled by its own indecency. It represents the only moment when English literature has yielded itself wholly and without reserve to the dominion of the senses; and the senses, when they have had, as here, their perfect work, kill poetry. The sturdy Puritanism still extant in late seventeenth-century England rose at last to deal this depraved drama its death blow. A good old divine,

Jeremy Collier, was its instrument, and it is refreshing still to read the honest indignation of his pamphlet, "A short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the British Stage." "The characters," says Collier, in describing this "superlatively scandalous" stage, "The characters do all forget themselves extreamely." It is really unnecessary to say anything further.

Rise of Memoirs.

One other significant matter is to be noted in the literary world; the rise of those often delightful records of private lives and daily doings which we call Journals or Memoirs. They suggest the growing interest in the affairs of simple ordinary life.

John Evelyn's "Diary," 1641-1697.

Samuel Pepys's "Diary," 1660-1669.

The most famous writers of this kind were John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys; of these, Evelyn was the more estimable character, but he is not so good reading as the graceless Pepys, whose journal, written in cipher for his private delectation, is one of the most frank revelations of personality ever vouchsafed to an astonished world. History too at this time is very like memoirs, but we shall not mention the historians. Neither shall we discuss the men of science, nor the philosophers, like Hobbes and Locke, who were such great intellectual forces in the seventeenth century. For the time is come when the harvest of books is so rich that at least in an elementary work we can pause to treat only of those which directly and obviously, through their presentation of life in the concrete and in beautiful form, belong to literature as an art.

REFERENCE BOOKS

The standard edition of Dryden is SCOTT'S, ed. by SAINTSBURY. Globe edition of the non-dramatic works. GARNETT, Age of Dryden. SAINTSBURY, Life of Dryden. WILLIAM STRUNK, Dryden's Essays on the Drama. MARGARET SHERWOOD, Dryden's Dramatic Theory and Practice. LOWELL, essay on Dryden in Among my Books. JOHNSON, Life of Dryden, in Lives of the Poets. MACAULAY, Essay on Dryden.

"The Rehearsal," found in the Arber reprints, is one of the most instructive parodies in English literature. CHARLES LAMB, on the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century, in "Essays of Elia," has a brief criticism of distilled excellence.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

This should be almost wholly on Dryden. The selections in Ward's "English Poets" are enough to illustrate his lyric, his didactic verse, and his satire. A running series of questions should elicit the distinctive characteristics of all this verse, and the difference between Dryden and the great masters of romance should be constantly pointed out, and the student be encouraged to discover his preferences. From now on it can be the aim of the teacher, far more distinctly than in the earlier periods of our literature, to develop in the student that true critical instinct which can only be formed when standards of comparison are established. Until the eighteenth century is reached, the chief aim in the study of literature is to quicken appreciation, and sensitiveness; now another aim should be added — the formation of sound judgment.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

As the class will hardly have time to read an heroic play, the teacher might well analyze and summarize one, — say "The Conquest of Granada." To omit quotations from the burlesque passages in "The Rehearsal" would be to miss an opportunity.

A lecture on the daily life of the times, constructed from Pepys, with copious quotations, would be worth giving.

CENTURY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE, ETC.	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1660	JOHN DRYDEN, 1631–1700. Samuel Pepys, 1632–1703. "Diary," 1660–1669 (deciphered and published 1825). Samuel Butler, 1612–1680. "Hudibras," 1663, 1664, 1678. John Evelyn, 1620–1706. "Diary," 1641–1697, pr. 1818. Sir George Etherege, 1634–1694. (dramatist). John Bunyan, 1628–1688. "Grace Abounding," 1666. "The Pilgrim's Progress," 1678–1684. Kate Phillips, "the matchless Orinda," 1631–1664. "Poems," 1669. Etc. Paradise Lost, 1667, 1674. Aphra Behn, 1640–1689. (dramatist and writer of verse).	La Rochefoucauld: "Maximes," 1665. Molière: "Tartufe," 1667. Racine: "Andromaque," 1667. La Fontaine: "Fables," 1668. Pascal: d. 1662. "Pensées," 1670. Spinoza: "Tractatus theologico-politicus," 1670.	The Restoration, 1660. Charles II, 1660–1685. Royal Society at London, 1660. First Standing Army. Act of Uniformity and Secession of Puritans, 1662. English take New Amsterdam from the Dutch, calling it New York, 1664. Plague in London, 1665. Great Fire in London, 1666. Old St. Paul's Cathedral burnt, 1666.	Versailles built, 1661. Death of Mazarin, 1661.
1670	Thomas Shadwell, 1640–1692. (dramatist). It was Shadwell who provoked Dryden's "Medal" and "MacFlecknoe." George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, 1627–1688.			

1670	"The Rehearsal," 1671. (A burlesque on the heroic drama.) Elkanah Settle, 1648–1723. (dramatist, city poet, and puppet-show keeper; the Doge of "Absalom and Achitophel," Part II). Sir William Temple, 1628–1698. "Essays." William Wycherley, 1640–1715. (dramatist). John Tillotson, abp. Canterbury, 1630–1694. "Sermons." Thomas Otway, 1651–1685. (dramatist). Nat Lee, 1655–1692. (dramatist). Nahum Tate, 1652–1715. "Poems," 1677. "Absalom and Achitophel," Part II, with additions by Dryden, 1682. "New Version of the Psalms" (with Brady), 1696. Thomas Rymer, 1639–1713. "The Tragedies of the Last Age considered," 1678.	Boileau: "L'Art Poetique," 1673. Death of Molière, 1673. Malebranche: "Recherche de la Vérité," 1674. Bossuet: "Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle," 1679. Death of Corneille, 1684.	Battle of Bothwell Brig, 1679. Present St. Paul's Cathedral built, 1675–1710. Habeas Corpus Act, 1679. Rye House Plot, 1683. James II, 1685–1689. Insurrection of Monmouth, 1685. William and Mary of Orange, 1689–1702.	The Mississippi explored by La Salle and Marquette, 1671–1680. King Philip's War (American), 1675. Peter the Great, 1689–1725. Europe against France, 1689–1697. First Newspaper in New England, 1690. Massacre of Witches at Salem, Massachusetts, 1692. University of Halle, 1694. First Fire Insurance Office, 1696.
1680	Sir Isaac Newton, 1642–1727. "Principia Philosophiæ Naturalis," 1687. "Optics," 1704. Matthew Prior, 1664–1721. "The Country Mouse and City Mouse" (with Charles Montague), 1687.			End of House of Austria in Spain, 1700. Yale College founded, 1700. St. Petersburg founded, 1703.

THE AGE OF DRYDEN — *Concluded*

CENTURY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE, ETC.	ENGLISH HISTORY	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1690	John Locke, 1632–1704. "Essay concerning Human Understanding," 1690. Etc. William Congreve, 1670–1729. (dramatist and poet). Colley Cibber, 1671–1757. (dramatist). Sir John Vanbrugh, 1666(?)–1726. (dramatist). Jeremy Collier, 1650–1726. "Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage," 1698. "Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain," 1708–1714. George Farquhar, 1678–1707. (dramatist).	Racine: "Athalie," 1691. "Dictionary of the French Academy," 1694. Death of Racine, 1699. Fénelon: "Télémaque," 1700.	Battle of the Boyne, 1690. Bank of England established, 1694. Abolition of Censorship of Press, 1695. Bounties begin to be given on importation of raw materials from the Colonies, 1701. Anne, 1702–1714.	

1. In general, where the dates of the works of authors in this period are given in the text of the book, they are omitted in this table.

2. This is the age of literary glory in France. For a time Italy has dropped out of the race.

3. The Restoration dramatists: Sir George Etherege, John Dryden, Aphra Behn, Thomas Shadwell, George Villiers, Elkanah Settle, William Wycherley, Nat Lee, Thomas Otway, William Congreve, Colley Cibber, Sir John Vanbrugh, George Farquhar, Nicholas Rowe.

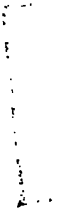
4. Lee and Otway wrote dramas of sentiment and melancholy tragedy.



ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

After the engraving by A. Pond



CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE; ITS POET

ONE day, when Dryden was sitting in state at Will's Coffee House in the later years of his life, a sickly little lad, with large, dark, shining eyes, paid the place a visit and gazed reverently at the great man. His name was Alexander Pope, and this visit was a great event to him, for already he cared more about books and writers than about anything else in the world. This boy was to be Dryden's successor. He was to carry to perfection the literary methods of Dryden's time, and the kinds of writing that Dryden inaugurated; he was to be the most important writer of verse in the age of Queen Anne.

Alexander Pope, 1688–1744.

Pope was born in 1688, the year of that Revolution which determined that the country should be permanently Protestant. But his parents were Roman Catholic, and this meant that Pope always lived a little apart from the run of society and politics in his day. At all events, a puny, suffering body would have doomed him to a life of seclusion. All his best interests were in literature; to study his works is to study his biography.

Pope's life and work.

Pope was one of the most precocious of English authors. When he was twelve years old, he composed two thousand heroic couplets on a certain Prince Alcander, and it is significant that in the ze-

nith of his powers many years later he inserted some of these very couplets in his great work, "The Dunciad." There was, in truth, almost no development in Pope's style. He was still a lad of sixteen when he wrote certain poems which at once secured him recognition in literary circles, a series of "Pastorals." In these poems, the couplet already rings delicately true. They are a cold mosaic from Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. But they are surprising work for a boy.

"Pastorals," 1709.

Even before the "Pastorals" were published, Pope had begun to form literary connections. He had admired, helped, probably quarrelled with, the old dramatist, Wycherley; and he had received from a minor critic of the day, William Walsh, advice which he never forgot. Other English poets, Walsh told the young aspirant, had been great; but no great poet had ever been correct. To correctness, therefore, Pope set his efforts. It was Walsh also who emphasized to him the idea that the best and only hope for modern verse is the imitation of the ancients; this idea, too, which Pope clearly enunciated in the preface to his "Pastorals," he never disavowed, though instinct was sometimes too strong to allow him literally to follow it.

In 1709, the "Pastorals" were published; and the period from this year till 1715, when the first volume of the "Iliad" came out, may be considered the first period of his work. His private life during this time and later was uneventful. He formed and broke sundry literary and personal connections, and lived quietly with his parents in the country not far from London.

Shortly after the "Pastorals," Pope wrote several other minor poems, the most important being "The Messiah," and "Windsor Forest." "The Messiah" is a mosaic of passages from Isaiah and Virgil. It has fine rhetorical ring, and part of it has passed into a familiar hymn, "Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise"; but it has not much to do with either Christianity or poetry. Pope's boyhood was passed near Windsor Forest, and he might have given us a fine poem on its mighty shade, but he did not. He was interested in the forest, not for its beautiful mystery, but for its literary and political associations, and for the opportunities it offered to the sportsman.

"The Messiah," 1712.

"Windsor Forest," 1713.

His first poem of great significance, was the "Essay on Criticism." Here he polished, till they shone, the critical maxims which he found in Boileau's "Art Poétique" and elsewhere, and the conclusions of his own common sense. The poem has little continuity, but it admirably expresses the general critical standards and methods of the time.

"Essay on Criticism," 1711.

A little longer treatment must be given to the daintiest trifle that ever came from Pope's pen, "The Rape of the Lock." It is a mock-heroic poem in five cantos. A pretty society girl, Miss Arabella Fermor, was vexed because a young gentleman, Lord Petre, had cut off one of her curls. Hoping to restore her to good humor, Pope, with scintillating wit and grace and neatness, though with a constant ripple of delicate satire, described the occasion, and incidentally the social life of the times. When he rewrote the poem, he added a machinery of fairy beings; sylphs, who are, as he tells us, the disembodied presences of the coquettes

"The Rape of the Lock," 1712–1714.

of the past, whose function it is to "tend the fair," while they hover around the scenes of their old triumphs. It is clever invention; "The Rape of the Lock" has justly been called the imaginative epos of the age of Queen Anne. To put Pope's fairies beside Shakespeare's in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest," to compare their tastes and functions, is a highly instructive and entertaining occupation. The poem as a whole is charmingly playful, if one does not shrink from the scorn of women and of society that gleams through its graceful raillery. The art of belittling was never carried further than in its whole treatment, nor was the anti-climax ever more effectively used than in many of its details.

Translation of "The Iliad," 1715–1720.

Translation of "The Odyssey," 1723–1725.

In 1715 Pope published the first books of his translation of "The Iliad"; by 1725, he had completed this, and had also produced, with the collaboration of others, a translation of "The Odyssey." This was the work that brought him widest fame and greatest fortune. Milton had received £10 for the first edition of "Paradise Lost"; Pope was paid for his Homer, over £8000. We are shocked at the discrepancy, yet we may be glad of the indication of a growing interest in letters and of a public that bought books. Pope translating Homer is a curious spectacle. The pseudo-classic age thought it admired the ancients very much, but Pope is enough to show us that it had remarkably little idea what the ancients were really like. "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but it is not Homer," said Bentley, a critic in advance of his time, to the proud little author; and the dictum has never been improved upon. Pope gives us

resounding and spirited verse, but the effect of the translation is as if Hector and Paris and Achilles fought in periwigs. The poem had, however, genuine fire and movement, and, hybrid thing as it was, it proved, and has remained to this day, immensely popular.

There is no object after this in following Pope's work chronologically, for his manner at fifty was much what it was at twelve, and it is more interesting to see the different types of writing which he liked to attempt. He enjoyed composing didactic verse; and his "Moral Essays" and "Essay on Man" remain the best examples our literature affords of this kind of work. The eighteenth century liked moral abstractions and general truths; indeed, it relished nothing better than a series of truisms neatly put. This Pope gave it. He did not pretend to originality; in these poems he simply versified the deistic philosophy of his friend, Bolingbroke. And with so perfect a felicity of concise and epigrammatic expression did he do this that he bestowed on this philosophy a far longer life in the general mind than it deserved.

"Essay on Man," 1732–1734.

"Moral Essays," 1732–1735.

But the native air of Pope was satire. This is already evident in "The Rape of the Lock," where he tries, as it were, to breathe the air of pure fancy, and fails. His best, most characteristic, and most enduring work, that where he really attains a great aim of the artist and sets his own personality free in effective form, is satirical. His "Imitations of Horace," his "Epistles," his "Dunciad," are work of this class; and they are all masterpieces. Pope's satire was not political, like that of Dryden; it was nearly

"The Dunciad," 1728, 1729, 1742, 1743.

"Imitations of Horace," 1733–1737.

all, one regrets to say, levelled against his personal enemies; and in the art of wounding he was certainly past master. Such a description as the famous portrait of Addison, under the name Atticus, sticks like a burr to the memory of that amiable man. But even if we find Pope ill-natured, we cannot fail to admire the splendid ease of his satirical verse, the keenness of his wit, and his penetrating eye. He belonged to a time that was inclined to satire, because it looked at men with the eyes of reason rather than of love, and he shared its attitude. We are glad that his greatest satire of all has a wider than personal application. This is the "Dunciad," written doubtless under the influence of the larger nature of Swift. The "Dunciad" is an attack on Dulness, modelled somewhat on Dryden's "MacFlecknoe," but with a stinging power all its own. It is perhaps the masterpiece of the verse of the period; an attack on Dulness was exactly the work which the age of Queen Anne was best fitted to achieve, for whatever else may be said about that age, dull it was not. The special writers whom Pope singled out for ridicule in this poem are forgotten, but this does not matter. There are always plenty of the tribe of Dunces left. We may almost say that any person must belong to the tribe who fails to enjoy the biting wit of this poem, and the great final picture of the whole universe crumbling away while chaos returns to reign.

The heroic couplet.

We have now passed in review the principal phases of Pope's work. Of 15,851 lines produced by him, excluding translations, all but 1,468 are in heroic couplets. The chief excellence and capacity of the

couplet is in neat epigram, clever antithesis, in condensation, brilliancy, point. Pope used it for all imaginable purposes. He condemned Spenser for introducing a variety of meters in the "Shepherd's Calendar." Did he himself wish to express the graceful simplicity of rustic life? He used the rhymed couplet. Was his theme the throbbing passion of a cloistered woman, torn by remorse and desire? It was in rhymed couplets that her laments reached his ear. Was it the flutter of fairy beings around the form of a lovely maiden? This very flutter was in antithetical beats. Was it the clash and clang of arms in the primitive warfare of heroes? Their blows were symmetrically measured. All this seems very strange to us; but no other metrical movement pleased the ear of Pope's contemporaries. We feel in only one department of his writing that the couplet is exactly adapted to what he wishes to convey; this is, of course, in his satires. Here each line stabs, and leaves no ragged edges to the wound.

Literary conditions.

Criticism, translation, ethical treatises in verse, satires, — these are Pope's subjects. They were the staple subjects of his age. We do not find literature in the eighteenth century seeking to pursue and capture the retreating vision of the winged ideal; it is pedestrian, realistic, haunted by no glamour of illusion. In such a period personal interests are sure to become very important in men's minds. Men of letters were preoccupied, not with great dreams nor with great causes, but with little contemporary affairs. Literature had become more than ever before a distinct profession; but the literary world was a narrow one; it centred in London, which was still quite a

small town. All the authors of the day, therefore, knew one another, and met at the clubs which were becoming a feature of the times. Literary history becomes largely a record of their intrigues, animosities, and friendships. In all these, Pope took his part. He was not strong enough to share much in club life, but at his little villa at Twickenham, where he had "methodized nature" to his heart's content, he enjoyed the converse of his friends. We may know a great deal about his private life if we will; his friendships, often breaking into feuds, with Addison, with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with Swift, with Bolingbroke, with Gay, and others; the queer tricks to which he resorted to raise his reputation; the ornaments with which he decked the damp little artificial grotto on his grounds which was his great delight. He was an irascible, sickly, oversensitive, intensely human man. He was often spiteful, and his clever pen enabled him to make his small spites immortal. But we must also remember to his credit that he was a devoted and tender son, who soothed with truest filial devotion the last years of his aged mother; that he loved some of his friends, like Swift and Gay, with constant loyalty, if he quarrelled with others; that to one woman friend, Martha Blount, he showed the most delicate and faithful affection; and that he dedicated his whole life, with unswerving enthusiasm, to the cause of literature.

Pope's personality.

Pope's death.

When Pope was fifty-six years old, he escaped from what he himself calls "that long disease, my life." His deathbed was touching. His friends, who loved him well, had gathered around him. "What is that?" said he, waving his skinny arm

above the counterpane; then, sinking back on his pillows with a smile of wonderful sweetness: "'Twas a vision!" The clever little man had not seen many visions in his lifetime; we are glad if one came to him when he was dying.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Globe edition of Pope. Letters of LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU. Life of Pope, by LESLIE STEPHEN, English Men of Letters Series. DENNIS, The Age of Pope. Life, by JOHNSON, edited by KATE STEPHENS. LOWELL, essay in My Study Windows. LESLIE STEPHEN, Hours in a Library, Pope as a moralist.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The "Rape of the Lock," the first canto of the "Essay on Man," a few aphorisms from the "Essay on Criticism," the satirical portrait of Addison in the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," and the conclusion of the "Dunciad" should be read. Recitations of epigrams from Pope, selected by the student, will help to make the chief merits of his style appreciated. A special topic may be given by a student who reads Homer, showing how Pope altered Homer. Pope's friendships also afford opportunity for a pleasant special study, and Pope's quarrels for one less pleasant but not uninstructive.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The range of Pope's ethics would probably better be handled by the teacher than by the class. Leslie Stephen's analysis in the books referred to above, and also in the "History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," is admirable. Ruskin has also, in "Fors Clavigera," an interesting tribute to the "Essay on Man."

CHAPTER IV

PROSE OF THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE

I. The Rise of Prose

ALL the good qualities of Pope's poetry appear to equal advantage in contemporary prose. The fact is significant. In the seventeenth century some noble prose had been written, more fervid and of richer harmonies than any we find in the eighteenth. But, in exact reverse to what happens now, the qualities that make the prose of Sir Thomas Browne or Jeremy Taylor delightful, are qualities shared with poetry. In the time of Dryden prose began to develop standards and virtues of its own; in the time of Addison and Swift it perfects these virtues, and becomes, what England had not possessed before, a thoroughly suitable instrument for conveying that wide range of everyday experience which deserves to get into literature, but is not fittingly expressed through poetry. No single life, it is to be hoped, is all prose; none certainly is all poetry. A nation, like a person, needs both means of expression.

A new reading public was rapidly forming during the age of Queen Anne. Education was getting diffused, the great middle class was becoming intelligent as well as powerful, books were multiplying. There had been a time when literature addressed itself chiefly to the court, or to chosen scholars,

when the visible drama which men could hear and see was the popular art form. Now all this was changed. The new public craved a new kind of books. We can imagine how it rejoiced in a prose that was clear, supple, conversational, while yet possessed of a polish and purity which made it quite different from mere written talk. Such was the prose given by Swift, Addison, and Steele. Let us look at these three men.

II. Jonathan Swift

1667-1745. To many people, Swift seems the greatest spirit of his time, and the most interesting. This is because his strong, sad nature was torn by inward conflict, and was never quite at home, as the natures of most of his contemporaries were, in the social ceremonials and party strifes that preoccupied the age. Swift passed much of his life in Irish exile, far from London, the one intellectual centre of his day. Understand him aright, and we shall see that he was from first to last an exile in spirit. He had lost memory or hope perhaps of a better country, but he was not content with what he knew.

Early life. Swift was twenty-one years older than Pope, for he was born in 1667. Before the seventeenth century ended he had written some of his most brilliant books. He was a relative of Dryden; "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," or as another version has it, "a Pindaric poet," said the great man to the greater, on one occasion. He was also a relative of Sir William Temple. Temple was a retired statesman, himself a pleasant essayist and patron of men of letters;

and in his household Swift passed several years as secretary. It was here that he wrote his first noteworthy books, "The Battle of the Books," and "The Tale of a Tub," both in 1697.

"Battle of the Books," written 1697, published 1704.

"The Battle of the Books" is a clever allegory, bearing on the controversy then in vogue concerning the relative merits of the ancients and the moderns. It is here that occurs the famous phrase, "sweetness and light," which Matthew Arnold was to adopt.

"The Tale of a Tub," written 1697, published 1704.

But "The Tale of a Tub" is of wider interest. It is a satirical allegory describing the religious parties of England under the names of Peter, who represented the Church of Rome, Jack, who stood for the Calvinistic sects, and Martin, the type of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. The characters and adventures of the three brothers are described with much cleverness, but the book is not reverent; and, though one is sorry for Swift, one cannot wonder if "The Tale of a Tub" hindered his advancement in the Church.

For this sardonic young man belonged to the Church. He was, according to his lights, a perfectly honest clergyman. He admired the liturgy of the Prayer-Book, and he conscientiously defended the Anglican position against the Deists, who were becoming popular in his day. But his weapon of defence was almost always satire, as in the case of one of the ablest satirical pamphlets ever written, his "Argument against abolishing Christianity," the smooth scathing irony of which seems far indeed removed from the method and spirit of the Gospels.

About 1710 Swift threw himself with energy into the political strife of the day. He had originally

been a Whig, but he now identified himself with the Tories, and did vigorous pamphleteering on their behalf. They gave him their personal friendship, and for a time he had much political influence. But he never received the preferment which he seemingly desired. In 1713 he was made Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, a position which was very far from satisfying his ambition. The death of the queen, however, in 1714, threw the Tories out of power, and destroyed all further hopes for Swift.

Political activity.

Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin, 1713.

The rest of his life, accordingly, he spent in Ireland, and he became a great Irish patriot, which was better than being a church dignitary in England. He put his powerful pen at the service of "that most distressful country." Her sufferings drew from him at one time the brilliant series of "Drapier's Letters," arguing against the introduction of a currency which would, as he believed, injure the national interests; at another time, he poured from his indignant soul one of the most amazing pieces of restrained irony in our own or any language, his "Modest Proposal for preventing Children of Poor People from being a Burden." The Irish became passionately devoted to him, and his name is still revered among their peasantry.

"Letters of M. B. Drapier," 1724, 1725.

"Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of Poor People from being a Burden," 1729.

In 1726 and 1727 we find Swift in London: paying pleasant visits to Pope, to whom he was warmly attached, at Twickenham, and helping to found the Martinus Scriblerus Club, organized for the express purpose of waging war against stupidity. It certainly did good service toward its end, for it is connected, not only with Pope's "Dunciad," but with

another great book, which was pretty certainly suggested by its meetings. This was Swift's masterpiece, "Gulliver's Travels." The book, as every one knows, is a story about the imaginary journeyings of one Lemuel Gulliver. It is one of the saddest satires on human life ever written, and it has had the curious fate of becoming a classic for children. This is due to the fertility of its invention, and to the sober realism, suffused with a delightful sense of fun, with which the life of the tiny people and the big people and the nation of horses are described to us. But if we think closely, we shall see how sad the book is. There is no illusion about it, there is little imagination, properly speaking. Swift looks first through the little, then through the big, end of a telescope, but the instrument points straight all the time at the world he knew, and it is not an attractive world. "Gulliver's Travels" has been compared with More's "Utopia"; we may also put it beside the great allegories of human life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the "Faerie Queene" and the "Pilgrim's Progress." Any one who cares to pursue these comparisons will feel the difference between the vision of the idealist and of the realist.

"Travels of Lemuel Gulliver," 1726.

Other clever things Swift wrote, notably certain social satires sparkling with wit. He was also skilful in writing light, bright, society verse. We enjoy Swift's easy octosyllables, and the relief they afford from the all but unbroken run of the heroic couplet. On the whole, however, we must accept Dryden's dictum. Swift is no poet; it is enough for him to be our greatest English satirist. His melancholy spirit, so clear-sighted in one way, so blind in

"Directions to Servants," written before 1738, published, 1745.

"Polite Conversation," 1745.

Verse.

another, belongs rather to the family of Rabelais than to any English group.

Swift's mind gave way at last, and during the closing years of his life his condition was tragic. He died in 1745 at his home in Dublin. Death, 1745.

The nearer one presses to Swift, the more interesting he becomes. There was a fund of tenderness hidden under his savage ways. He was a man whom women loved, often passionately, sometimes to their great sorrow. He seemed to have loved one only: Esther Johnson, whom he had known from her childhood, and whom he has made the world know under the name of Stella. She lived near him in Ireland; and when Swift was in London, he wrote her a journal, in a "little language" of endearing playfulness, which remains a singularly touching and intimate thing. Perhaps he married Miss Johnson; we cannot tell: there is a mystery here. At all events, it seems to have been her death that hastened his last, long, painful illness.

In person, Swift was "a tall, powerful man, with a rather dull face, illuminated by very singular and flashing blue eyes." One shrinks from the great Dean a little; but one gives him admiration, and deep compassion.

III. Daniel Defoe

In some ways the contemporary writer with whom Swift had the strongest affinity was Daniel Defoe, who was six years his senior. Defoe wrote "Robinson Crusoe," and this immortal work, like "Gulliver's Travels," derives its charm from its knack in con- 1661–1731. "Robinson Crusoe," 1719, 1720.

vincing us that the impossible is the most natural thing in the world. This is what the realistic art of the eighteenth century can accomplish. Defoe wrote other books, and was also one of the pioneers of modern journalism. But he did not belong to the accredited literary circles of his day. If the truth must be told, he was a time-server and a tramp; but he knew a good many things about human nature, and there was sweetness and wholesomeness somewhere in him, or he could not have written "Robinson Crusoe." It is a little remarkable that the book, as well as all his other books of value, was written when he was well on in years, over fifty years old.

IV. Addison and Steele

Addison and Steele are the leading essayists of the eighteenth century. We do not shrink from them as from Swift, but neither do they give us the same impression of greatness. We know them well, as we know all these men, in a pleasant, familiar, modern way. We grow fond of Irish, extravagant, right-feeling, wrongdoing Steele; as our temperaments may decide, we are attached to his kindly, reasonable friend, or just a little bored by him.

Sir Richard Steele, 1671–1729.

It will be noted that all these prose writers were a good deal older than Pope, though the precocious little poet got into the life of letters almost as soon as they did. Addison and Steele were boys together at the Charter House School in London; and their best work in after life was done together. But their careers were very different. Steele was always in



JOSEPH ADDISON

1672-1719

After the painting by Godfrey Kneller



debt, always in scrapes. He left the University without a degree, to turn soldier: he wrote a religious book called "The Christian Hero," to which he plaintively remarked that he found it hard to live up; he wrote also a number of forgotten dramas. He married for love, he was warmly and loyally devoted to his friends, he was a blundering, lovable man of genius. Addison, on the other hand, went through life with sweet, unimpeachable gravity and correctness. "A parson in a tye-wig," a friend called him. He was always decorous, amiable, cultured, dignified, usually most kind and generous. He had good principles which he felt no temptation to deny, and tastes which were a credit to him. He was of an academic turn of mind and type of person. He wrote as a young man well-turned verse in the fashion of the day, some of which made a political hit and secured him a pension; he also wrote a tragedy, "Cato," which showed little except that the age of Queen Anne did well not to attempt drama. But Addison might never have been a great name in English letters had it not been for an enterprise into which Steele drew him.

"The Christian Hero," 1701.

Joseph Addison, 1672–1719.

"Cato," acted 1713.

This was the Periodical Essay. Everything was ready for it. All London, we may almost say, was waiting for the appearance of a new literary form. Nearly two thousand coffee-houses were sharpening the wits of the men, promoting clever talk and eager interest in all the topics of the day. The rise of women in social importance, on the other hand, was creating a clamorous demand for the introduction of the social graces into the intellectual life. Society was limited enough to share most of its interests in

The periodical essay.

common, and large enough to welcome a new medium of communication. To meet the needs of society, accordingly, — we might go further, and say to meet the needs of the town, — the periodical essay arose. It belonged, in origin and character, to what we describe as occasional literature; but so charmingly was it handled by Addison and Steele, that their daily journals have become classics of the language.

The last years of the seventeenth century had been feeling toward something of the kind; Defoe in particular had published a political paper called the *Review*. But it was under the auspices of Steele, and perhaps with the inspiration of Swift, that the periodical first achieved high success. For in April, 1709, appeared the first number of the *Tatler*, an attractive miscellany on politics, literature, and art, which came out three times a week. Steele started it. Addison did not begin to write till the eighteenth number, and of the 271 numbers which appeared in all, Steele wrote 188 to Addison's 36. Before long, the *Tatler* was abandoned, and was followed by its famous successor the *Spectator*, which appeared daily. Addison wrote rather more, Steele rather less, than half the *Spectator*, and there were other contributors, among them Pope, whose "Messiah" appeared as one of these daily numbers. The *Guardian* succeeded the *Spectator*, but did not have the same success.

The *Tatler* April 12, 1709, to Jan. 2, 1711.

The *Spectator*, March 1, 1711 to Dec. 6, 1712, and again in 1714.

The *Guardian*.

Perhaps Steele was a little more inventive than Addison. Not only was the whole scheme his, but he also was the first creator of the immortal Sir Roger de Coverley, the character who did so much to make the *Spectator* famous. But it is Addison of

whom people in general think when the *Spectator* is mentioned, and not unjustly, for his powers were both more versatile and better sustained than Steele's. The mind and character of Addison are a perfect expression of the best ideals of the age.

Grace, urbanity, timeliness, marked the daily essays that made up the *Spectator*. Now the editors would treat their audience to a bit of character drawing, gently humorous though never unkind, as in the delightful series on Sir Roger de Coverley; now there would be a discussion of Italian opera, new in those days, as Wagner was not so very long ago. Now a coquette's heart would be dissected, or a lady's library described with delicate raillery; it is surprising how large a proportion of the *Spectator* is addressed to the fair sex. Now, discreetly introduced, we find admirable moral reflections, or it may be a paper of literary criticism, commending with moderation "Paradise Lost," or half-apologetically confessing to a weakness for old English ballads. No one can fail to be pleased with the cheerful good humor, the sweet reasonableness, the agreeable style, of the whole *Spectator*. Addison's aim was distinctly that of a censor of manners and morals. "To enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality," he announced as his plan. He certainly succeeded, and this tempered union continued for several generations to satisfy English instincts.

Characteristics.

It was distinctly a morality for polite society. No cries from Swift's miserable Irish penetrated its charmed circle. The frivolous occupations of the town and the lightness of its manners won at times

Ethics of the *Spectator*.

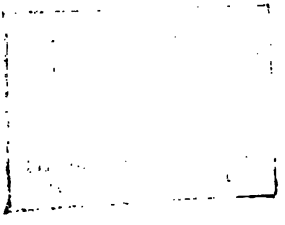
a gentle rebuke from its self-appointed critic; but he offered it few suggestions of higher interests or larger desires. The times were complacent and self-satisfied, assured of their own finality, pursued by no haunting sense of a future different from themselves toward which they might press. "It is impossible," wrote Addison, "for us who live in the latter ages of the world to make observations in Wit, Morality, or any Art or Science, which have not been touched upon by others. We have little left us but to represent the common Sense of Mankind in more strong, more beautiful, or more uncommon Lights."[1] What would Addison have thought had he been confronted with the poetry of Shelley?

We have no time to discuss the other writers of the period, though Shaftesbury, Arbuthnot, and others are interesting minor figures. The great Berkeley, the idealist philosopher of a matter-of-fact age, lies in any case outside our scope. We have already illustrated all the characteristic phases of Augustan literature as the literature of this age is sometimes called. Its strength lay in its rational delineation of the life around it, and this delineation was always tinged with satire. Sometimes the satire had a spiteful, personal animus, as in Pope; sometimes it was courteous and cheerful, glancing at manners rather than at passion, as in Addison. In Swift it took a wider sweep, assumed a fiercer cast, and allied itself less to jest than to tragedy. But satire, in one form or another, is rarely far away in the age of Queen Anne. Its prevalence points to the one essential, fundamental fact, in the attitude of

[1] Addison on "The Essay on Criticism," *Spectator*, No. 253.



RICHARD STEELE
1671-1729
After the painting by J. Richardson



this period; this is the fact that the Understanding has supplanted the Imagination as the governing principle in life.

REFERENCE BOOKS

ASHTON, Social Life in the Age of Queen Anne.

THACKERAY'S Henry Esmond gives the best picture of the age of Queen Anne taken as a whole which we possess. See, also, LECKY'S History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. I, Ch. IV, and SYDNEY'S England in the Eighteenth Century. H. WILLIAMS, English Letters and Letter-writing in the Eighteenth Century.

Addison, see COURTHOPE'S Life, in English Men of Letters; MACAULAY'S Essays. Swift, Selections by STANLEY LANE POOLE; Life, by LESLIE STEPHEN; THACKERAY, English Humorists; SCUDDER, Social Ideals in English Letters, Ch. III. Steele, Life, by AUSTIN DOBSON; THACKERAY, English Humourists.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

A picture of the social and literary life of the age of Queen Anne is one of the great things to be aimed at. To this end no means is so good as copious reading from the *Spectator*. The range of manners and morals should be carefully noted by inductive work, never simpler than here. Country life, as shown in the Sir Roger papers; town life, of the clubs, of the drawing-rooms, of the home; the interests of women; the daily life of an average citizen; — all these can be studied in this first literature of absolute realism.

It is instructive to turn from the graceful society studies of the *Spectator* to Swift's picture of the state of Ireland. But if this seems too cruel a transition, "Gulliver's Travels" shows the general, deliberate estimate of civilization, formed by the strongest, though not the sanest, intellect of the time. The book should be read, not only for its marvellous art, but for the intellectual concept behind it, and should be put beside the social pictures of an imaginary society found in earlier and later times; the absence of any social idealism in it should be, not only suggested, but accounted for.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1702	JOSEPH ADDISON, 1672–1719. SIR RICHARD STEELE, 1671–1729. Nicholas Rowe, 1673–1718. (dramatist). Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, 1608–1674. "History of the Great Rebellion," 1704–1707. "History of Civil War in Ireland," 1721. "Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon," 1759. (Clarendon's prose belongs to the seventeenth century, although he was not published till the eighteenth.) JONATHAN SWIFT, 1667–1745. Daniel Defoe, 1661–1731. (writer of fiction). George Berkeley, 1685–1753. "New Theory of Vision," 1709. "Principles of Human Knowledge," 1710. Etc.	Death of Bossuet, 1704. Leibnitz: "Théodicée," 1710.	Marlborough, fl., 1702–1712. Battle of Blenheim, 1704. George I, 1714–1727.	Discovery of Herculaneum, 1708.
1710	ALEXANDER POPE, 1688–1744. *The Tatler* (periodical essay), April 12, 1709, to Jan. 2, 1711. *The Spectator*, March 1, 1711, to Dec. 6, 1712. Resuscitated, 1714.	Le Sage: "Gil Blas," 1715–1735. Montesquieu: "Lettres," 1721. Voltaire: "Henriade," 1724.	Rebellion of First Pretender, 1715–1716. South Sea Bubble, bursts, 1720. Rise of great English towns.	J. A. Watteau (p), 1684–1721. J. Sebastian Bach (m), 1685–1754.

1715	John Gay, 1688–1732. "The Shepherd's Week," 1714. "Fables," 1727. "The Beggar's Opera," 1728. Etc. (A versatile poet, imitative, but with a real lyric quality to his verse.) Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1689–1762. "Town Eclogues," 1716. "Letters," 1763. "Poetical Works," 1768. Allan Ramsay, 1685–1758. "Scots Songs," 1719. "The Evergreen," 1724. "The Gentle Shepherd," 1725. Etc. Isaac Watts, 1674–1748. "Psalms and Hymns," 1719. "Divine and Moral Songs for Children," 1720. "Logic," 1725.	"Lettres sur les Anglais," wr. 1728; pub. 1734.	George II, 1727–1760.	
1730	James Thomson, 1700–1748. *The Grub Street Journal*, pub. weekly, 1730–1737. *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, estab. 1731. Joseph Butler, 1692–1752. "Analogy of Religion." William Shenstone, 1714–1763. (poet). John and Charles Wesley, "Collection of Psalms and Hymns."	Klopstock: "Messias," 1748–1771.	Hogarth (p), 1697–1764. David Garrick, actor, 1716–1779. Wesley appoints first lay preachers, 1741.	First gas made from coal, 1739. Princeton College founded, 1746. Handel, 1685–1759.

THE AGE OF POPE AND SWIFT, 1702–1744 — *Continued*

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1730	David Hume, 1711–1776. "Treatise of Human Nature," 1739. "Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary," 1741–1742. "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," 1748. Etc. Samuel Richardson, 1689–1761. (novelist). William Collins, 1721–1759. (poet). Henry Fielding, 1707–1754. "Plays." "Novels." "Essays."			
1740	Edward Young, 1681–1795. "The Complaint, or Night Thoughts, on Life, Death, and Immortality," 1742, 1743, 1744, 1745. Etc.		Rebellion of Charles Edward, 1745–1746. Battle of Culloden, 1746.	Discovery of Pompeii, 1750. University of Pennsylvania, 1751.

This is the period of the essay, in prose and verse.

m = musician.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE OF THE NOVEL

EVEN while Addison was saying that nothing new was ever to be expected in literature, an entirely new thing of much importance was on its way. The middle years of the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of the novel. Already, as Addison's own work shows us, literature was trembling toward it. The romantic narratives of Defoe and Swift gained their power from their realism of detail; writing like the Sir Roger de Coverley papers, and, still more, the little airy, sparkling sketches of episodes in social life, and the short, sentimental tales frequent in the *Spectator*, pointed yet more plainly to real modern novels.

I. Samuel Richardson

In 1740, accordingly, the first actual novel appeared. Its name was "Pamela"; its author, Samuel Richardson, a stout, sentimental little printer, fifty years old. 1689–1761.

The occasion of "Pamela" was curiously accidental for a book that was to inaugurate so vast a literary development as modern fiction. People at that time cared a great deal for good letter-writing; indeed, no age has ever produced so many witty, delightful letters as the eighteenth century. But "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded," 1740.

not every one who wanted to write letters properly knew how to do so, and there grew up a demand for the sort of books of direction and example that used to be called "The Polite Letter-writer." Now the printer Richardson loved to write letters, and he had so pleasant and facile a flow of language that young women used to get him to compose their love letters for them. A certain bookseller got wind of this gift of Richardson's, and invited him to write for publication a set of model letters. Richardson was pleased to accept; he began the series; they were to be from a young servant girl to her parents in the country. He named her Pamela, and as he went on he thought that it would be a good plan to connect the letters so that they should tell a story. He wrote on and on, and by and by a complete novel was before him, and Pamela had married her master!

The town went wild over the adventures of this young woman. Richardson, having discovered his power, was not slow in following this book with others: "Clarissa Harlowe" and "Sir Charles Grandison." These are all the books he wrote, but they are enough. They are immensely long, and they are all written in series of letters, which everybody in the book writes on the slightest provocation to everybody else. The characters must have spent so much time in letter-writing that we hardly see how there was any time left for the things they write about to happen.

"Clarissa Harlowe," 1748.

"Sir Charles Grandison," 1753.

But though it is easy to laugh at these queer old books, they have a power of their own. As a picture of the social life of the eighteenth century, nothing equals them. Many romances had been written before. In the seventeenth century volumes of inter-

minable adventure, heroic and amatory, were in vogue. Pope laughs at them when he tells us how the Baron had built an altar to Love in his room, "Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt." But these romances were of a wholly different type from the minute description of contemporary manners and dissection of contemporary feelings in the books of Richardson.

"Clarissa Harlowe" is the best of these books. It tells of the long persecution to which a young girl is subjected at the hands of the villain Lovelace, of her protracted sufferings and exceedingly deliberate dying. The pathos is prolix and self-conscious, and as we watch Clarissa designing the device for her own tombstone, we are seized with an impatient recollection of Ophelia in her simplicity and Desdemona in her reticence; but though Richardson's pathos is not Shakespeare's, the only people who deny its heart-breaking reality are those who have never read the book through. The close descriptions, moreover, of family life, and the intricate, subtle, painstaking analysis of character, give the book enduring value. We do not wonder that Rousseau, across the ocean, drew inspiration from it for his own greater work, the "Nouvelle Héloïse." As for "Sir Charles Grandison," the book has less real value, but it remains a joy forever to those who relish it at all. Richardson wrote it to show what he thought a perfect man should be. Spenser had done a similar thing in the sixteenth century, but it is a far cry from the "Faerie Queene" to "Sir Charles Grandison." For Sir Charles is a terrible prig: "He is great," says the French critic Taine; "he is generous, delicate, pious,

irreproachable; he has never done a mean action nor made a wrong gesture. His conscience and his wig are unsullied. Let us canonise him and stuff him with straw." We have seen something of the ideal heroes of the English race, from the old days of Beowulf through those of the noble knights of romance to Sir Philip Sidney. It is a significant fact that Sir Charles Grandison is the ideal hero of the eighteenth century.

II. Henry Fielding

1707–1754. The imagination of the times produced another hero, not ideal; his name was Tom Jones. Even the public which welcomed the novels of Richardson so gladly, laughed at the primness of Sir Charles. The person who laughed most effectively was Richardson's rival novelist, Henry Fielding. Fielding was one of the Bohemian men of letters who were becoming common at this time; he had written a good deal more or less acceptable occasional literature, and some rather poor dramas. But amusement at "Pamela," and desire to parody it, inspired him to write his first really great novel, "Joseph Andrews." The book was intended to show the adventures of Pamela's brother Joseph, as great a prig of a boy as Pamela was a prig of a girl. The caricature was forgotten before the book had progressed far, however, in Fielding's delight at the pure, racy, independent comedy that grew under his hand. Parson Adams, one of the characters of this book, is as immortal as Falstaff. Having begun to write fiction, Fielding liked it well enough to go on.

"The Adventures of Joseph Andrews," 1742.

He was thirty-five years old when "The Adventures of Joseph Andrews" was published; in the following year he followed it by a book, possibly however written earlier, "Jonathan Wild the Great"; in 1749 appeared the greatest of Fielding's books and one of the greatest of all English novels, "Tom Jones," and in 1751, already in failing health but with genius undiminished, though tending to a graver and more pathetic art, his last story, "Amelia." Fielding died at Lisbon, whither he had gone in search of health, in 1754.

"Jonathan Wild the Great," 1743.
"The History of Tom Jones," 1749.
"Amelia," 1751.

Richardson was a sentimentalist; he shows us what the eighteenth century liked to consider itself: Fielding was a realist; he shows us what the eighteenth century probably was. The prevalent coarseness of manner, the prominence of animal instincts, and at the same time the honesty and hearty good-temper that marked the nation as a whole, all find perfect expression in "Tom Jones." The book is the product of a vigorous intelligence. It had, what Richardson quite lacked, a strong sense of humor, not always of the most refined kind; and, like all Fielding's books, it is written with the author's eye fixed straight on the objects he describes. The book takes us out of the drawing-room and the club, where so much of the literature of the century holds us, into the good fresh air of the road and among the plain people of everyday England. We are interested to see what these people are like, and we discover many good qualities in them; nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that one would have strong objections to living in the society which Fielding depicts.

III. Other Novelists

Tobias George Smollett, 1721–1771.

Into the path broken by Richardson and Fielding others were not slow to follow. Two other novelists of the central years of the century, Smollett and Sterne, are only less famous than these. Smollett's chief works were: "Roderick Random," "Peregrine Pickle," and, twenty years later, the last of the great eighteenth-century novels, born out of due time, "Humphrey Clinker." Smollett wrote history too; and a translation of "Don Quixote" shows his literary affinities. The type of his novels is suggested by the so-called Picaresque novels of Spain, stories of scapegrace adventure, of which the most famous is "Gil Blas."

"The Adventures of Roderick Random," 1748.

"The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle," 1751.

"The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker," 1771.

Laurence Sterne, 1713–1768.

"The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy," 1759–1767.

"Sentimental Journey through France and Italy," 1768.

The work of Sterne is "Tristram Shandy" and "The Sentimental Journey." They are wandering books, full of good character sketching and whimsical meditation on life. Sterne illustrates better than any other of these novelists one phase of the eighteenth century — an extreme, almost affected, sensibility of feeling. This sensibility was sometimes real and touching, but it was often self-conscious, and we cannot care for it much, except perhaps as a literary flavor, when we see it combined, as it is in Sterne, with a coarseness of moral sense.

Later fiction of the eighteenth century.

These novels were long, and they seem serious reading to a generation nourished as ours is on short magazine tales. But they were the lightest and most readable things the world had known, and their popularity was immense. When anything so delightful as the novel was discovered it was sure to multiply fast; and we cannot follow its prog-

ress. Yet it is strange how few really great novels were produced between these pioneers and Sir Walter Scott. All these books, except "Humphrey Clinker," had appeared within about twenty-five years. Johnson and Goldsmith, a little later, both made incursions into the new realm. Miss Burney, a maid of honor at the court of George III, carried on, in her "Evelina," "Cecilia," and "Camilla," the tradition of Richardson. Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling" shows him under the influence of Sterne. But the invigorating realism with which modern fiction had started on its way was not to be sustained without break; and we shall soon have to note the extravagant absurdities of early romantic fiction.

IV. Reasons for the Rise of the Novel

The accidental way in which the novel seemed to enter literature was only apparent. Looking deeper, we can see that its advent was a philosophical necessity. With the new public that read, it took the place that the drama had held with the old public that saw. For the public always needs an art form that shall present to it, not discussion about life, but life itself. The new instrument was in some ways of wider range than the drama. The novel reflects life indeed, but it also admits the element of critical comment which the drama excludes; so it suits the modern world, which will always be criticising even while it is creative. Moreover, the drama can only present the crises of life, but a great deal determines life besides crises. The novel can show people alone, without resorting to awkward soliloquy; it can show

what nature means to them. Above all, the novel differs from the drama because of its more habitual interest in homely, everyday people and in homely, everyday doings. It is the art form of the new democracy, and with the rising democracy it arose. There are other ways, too, in which it differs from the drama; these it is interesting for every one to think out for himself.

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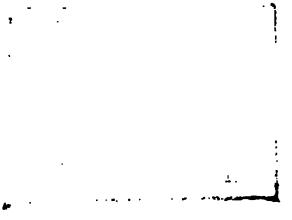
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SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Class-discussion on the scope of the novel as compared with epic and drama may inaugurate the study of fiction. School life being limited in extent, American students cannot enjoy the privilege of following in detail the history of Miss Byron's heart or Tom Jones's wanderings. Selected scenes may be read, as the deathbed of Clarissa, — or a part of it, — the proposal of Sir Charles, etc. With older classes, topics like The Eighteenth-century Heroine, The Eighteenth-century Villain, The Eighteenth-century Hero, Home Life in the Eighteenth Century, etc., can be handled. It is salutary to carry out the comparison suggested in the text, and place Sir Charles beside the great heroes of the earlier world. An analysis of the pathos of Richardson and Sterne, compared with the pathos of Shakespeare, is good training.



SAMUEL JOHNSON
1709-1784



CHAPTER VI

JOHNSON AND HIS TIMES

I. Samuel Johnson

IN 1738, six years before Pope died, an ungainly young man from the country presented to the town a satirical poem called, after it, "London." Pope liked the poem and tried, though in vain, to help Samuel Johnson, the struggling author. He could not know that Johnson was to become his successor, the literary dictator who should rule with a rod of iron the town he had mournfully satirized. But so it was. Johnson's burly figure, in the last half of the eighteenth century, dominates all others. The age of democracy and division was coming in literature as everywhere else : all honor to the last undisputed Monarch of the World of Letters ! 1709–1784.

Johnson's writings, if the truth must be told, sometimes bore us a little, but his personality interests us immensely. Fortunately, we know this personality in every detail through one of the most remarkable biographies in the world, — his "Life," written by his disciple, James Boswell. Johnson himself did a great deal to lift biography into a dignified literary form, through his admirable "Lives of the Poets"; and people in the modern world have grown to care for it more and more as interest in individuals, in the happenings of every day, and in the intimacies of character, has become keener. But

perhaps no biography has ever so perfectly revealed its subject, as Boswell's "Johnson." Boswell, a somewhat insignificant and fatuous person, the son of a good Scotch family, was in a way a very small man; but he had the grace to recognize and love a great one, and this grace enabled him to write an immortal book.

Personal traits.

Johnson was very ill with scrofula when he was a child; and perhaps he was one of the last children in England to be taken by his mother to be touched for "the king's evil," as this disease was then called. But the touch of Queen Anne did not cure him, and all his life was affected by the illness. From one eye he could not see at all; his face was scarred, as well as plain and heavy. He had a great clumsy body which he rolled awkwardly about, he was untidy in his dress and his wigs, and he very much liked a large dinner. His curious impulses and tricks bewildered his friends. "I have not had a roll for a long time," said the great lexicographer one day, when standing on the tip of a little hill; and he deliberately placed his large body on the ground, and rolled over, and over, and over, to the bottom. His manners were uncouth. "You may observe," he said to Boswell, "that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity," but few people would have agreed with him. He had a terrible way of snubbing people, and a savage veracity. Moreover, he was often unjust, wholly devoid of tact and of the arts and graces that make life pleasant. Yet despite his eccentricities, few men have been more loved than Johnson, and few have deserved it better. He had the most forceful mind of his generation, he had also a large and tender heart and a devout religious spirit.

Early life.

Johnson's early life, like that of most literary men of the day, was filled with struggles and poverty. Somehow, it is not quite clear how, he got to Oxford; but he left the University without a degree. A little later, "having," as Mr. Leslie Stephen remarks, "no money and no prospects, Johnson naturally married." His wife, the "dear Tetty" of his constant affections, was twenty-one years older than himself, very fat, and far from attractive to other people; Johnson, however, loved her deeply, and mourned her intensely during the thirty years that he survived her. Writing of her death many years afterward, he said: "I have ever since seemed to myself broken off from mankind; . . . a gloomy gazer on a world to which I have little relation."

Johnson in London, 1737.

Meanwhile, having tried in vain to support himself by keeping school, he came to London, with, as he afterward declared, two pence halfpenny in his pocket, to seek his fortune. A pupil of his, David Garrick, later the famous actor, was with him; and a hard time the two had of it. Literature was not yet, properly speaking, a profession; Johnson himself was to do more than any one man to lift it into an honorable rank. Things were even worse than in the days of Queen Anne, when letters had been comparatively popular and prosperous. So intense was the misery and discomfort of the poor authors who then and earlier lived in Grub Street, a wretched quarter of London, that the name of the street has become a sort of metaphor. The only way to succeed was to secure the patronage of some great or distinguished person by dedicating a work to him, —a most uncertain method, to say nothing of its

Literary conditions.

unpleasantness. Johnson, who was of a finely independent temper, practically dealt this system of patronage its death-blow, in one of the most scathing epistles ever written, his "Letter to Lord Chesterfield," published some years later in connection with his Dictionary. "I thought," growled Johnson, concerning this nobleman, "that he had been a lord among wits; but I find he was only a wit among lords." But the Dictionary at this time was undreamed of, and Johnson struggled and suffered with the rest. Many years later, he burst into tears in speaking of the wretchedness of this time.

"London," 1738.

Somehow or other, however, by any hackwork he could secure, Johnson eked out a living. "London" made rather a hit and gave him something of a name to start with. Ten years later, his dull tragedy of "Irene" was acted, through the influence of Garrick, who had rapidly risen in his profession, and Johnson made quite a little money by it. In the same year appeared his "Vanity of Human Wishes," another satirical poem, stronger and finer than "London." Both of these poems were imitated from Juvenal, for whose sardonic genius Johnson had much affinity. At about this time, he also tried his hand at periodical essays after the fashion of Addison; and the *Rambler* and the *Idler* had a certain success and increased his reputation, though we find it hard to enjoy them to-day.

"Irene," acted 1749.

"Vanity of Human Wishes," 1749.

The *Rambler*, 1750–1752.

The *Idler*, 1758–1760.

"Dictionary of the English Language," planned 1747, published 1755.

But his "Dictionary of the English Language" is Johnson's most important achievement. He planned it in 1747, finished it in 1755; and it was a great work. It takes a vigorous and courageous mind to plan a dictionary, and to put it through, as Johnson did,

practically by himself. Of course a dictionary is not literature, and is soon superseded; but it renders a great service to literature, and nothing better illustrates the growth of sound critical instincts in the eighteenth century than the demand for such a work.

"Rasselas," 1759.

The publication of the Dictionary gave Johnson a commanding position in the world of letters, and soon placed him above want. Not at once, however, for, in 1759, we find him writing with great rapidity his philosophical romance of "Rasselas," to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral. This became the most popular of his works, and one may meet translations of it all over the world. It describes the search for happiness of a certain Prince and Princess, and moves to a suggestion that this search can never be fulfilled. Says the Eastern sage, Imlac, "Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured and little to be enjoyed." This grave conclusion is doubtless Johnson's own.

"Lives of the Poets," 1779–1781.

After this time Johnson did not write much, until in his ripe old age he produced, as prefaces to an edition of the poets, those "Lives" which are really his best and most living works. But we cannot call him idle. For many years he devoted himself to a great neglected art, the Art of Conversation. Several other famous Englishmen have excelled in this art, notably Ben Jonson and Samuel Taylor Coleridge: but surely Johnson was the greatest talker of them all. When he wrote, his style was pompous, though solid and weighty; he used a great many big words and Latinized inversions, so that a "Johnsonian style" has become a proverb. But when he talked, the fertility

of his mind was amazing, and he had an alarming gift for going directly to the point. His understanding was singularly powerful in all regions which it was competent to enter, and, as we read the happily abundant records of his words, we feel that he was indeed a masterly critic of society and life.

Johnson in his club.

It was during these years that Boswell, to our advantage and the regret of his "lady," attached himself to the footsteps of the great man; "I have seen a bear led by a man," sighed Mrs. Boswell, "but I never before saw a man led by a bear." The bear, however, was the friendliest of creatures. Surely, never can there have been more delightful and memorable converse than that held at the Club which he frequented. There met with him nearly all the distinguished men of the day. Garrick, kind-hearted beneath all his affectations, was a member; so were Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great artist, Burke the statesman and orator, C. J. Fox, Boswell, and Oliver Goldsmith. We have scant time in our hurried age for such leisurely, rich intercourse as that which this group enjoyed; even to think of it stimulates the imagination.

Johnson's character.

The more we study Johnson, the more we appreciate his extraordinary vigor of mind and character. Toward the end of his life he suffered much, and on one occasion his organs of speech were paralyzed in the night; this is how he described the experience to a friend: "I was alarmed, and prayed God that, however He might afflict my body, He would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not

to be very good. I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties." The man who could take such an experience in such a way had sanity of nature. There are times when nothing is more salutary to us than Johnson's sincere common sense. His estimates are full of discernment. "He thinks justly, but he thinks faintly," says Johnson of some one; and that whole mind is known to us.

Johnson disavowed all false emotion and hated sentimentality. Yet never was there a tenderer heart. The man who would snub a literary upstart with incredible savageness, would, in his nocturnal rambles round London, gently tuck pennies into the fists of the poor sleeping ragamuffins, pleased to think of their surprise in the morning. He filled his house with a queer set of dependents: a blind old lady, a negro servant, and others, who squabbled with one another and grumbled at him; and not only did he bear their presence with resignation, but he actually loved them with loyal, uncritical affection. Despite his gruffness, he was a warm and faithful friend. And we respect Johnson most of all when we learn that under his kindliness and his social good cheer there lay a profound constitutional melancholy so deep that it was what doctors to-day call melancholia. His ceaseless depression, borne with Christian courage and equanimity, makes him, when rightly understood, a profoundly pathetic figure.

Opinions are often rather an unimportant part of a personality; but Johnson's opinions were very much a portion of him. He was an extreme Tory and a High Churchman. He liked the Stuarts,

though in rather a whimsical fashion; it was a great event to him, however, when king George summoned him to a talk. He fasted always on Good Friday, and observed the discipline of the Church with scrupulous, solemn devotion. His religion was intensely real to him. This is somewhat remarkable, for Johnson did not have the great help of an imagination in being religious. He was the summary of his age at its best and highest; he embodied both its limitations and its strength.

II. Oliver Goldsmith

1728-1774. Goldsmith is the one author of the age to dispute with Johnson the position of literary preëminence; and there are many to whom the disreputable, ugly, soft-hearted Irishman seems a more engaging, if less honorable, figure than the great Doctor himself. Oliver Goldsmith, the son of an Irish clergyman, received his education at Trinity College, Dublin. He led a wandering life, for some years, mainly on the Continent; but, in 1756, he settled in London, and picked up a living as he could by miscellaneous hackwork in literature. Like many men of letters at the time, he led a reckless, unconventional, poverty-stricken, but, on the whole, light-hearted sort of existence. He was continually in debt; but this was largely because he was so generous to his friends, and, even when we disapprove of him the most, we find him distinctly lovable. He died, unmarried, in his forty-sixth year.

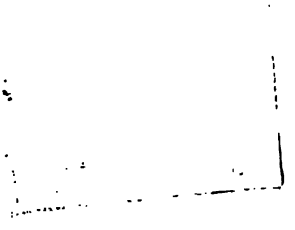
"The Traveller," 1764. Apart from the large body of his occasional and miscellaneous work, Goldsmith produced a surpris-



OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



ing amount of permanent value. His two serious poems, "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village," are in Pope's metre, the heroic couplet; and they were submitted to Johnson for criticism, and, perhaps, for revision. But they have a sincere feeling and a sweetness of melody that we do not find in Pope, and a simplicity of art and emotion unknown to Johnson. They are the last notable work of the artificial school in poetry. "The Vicar of Wakefield" is a story of undying charm. It is an idyl of simple English country life, preposterous enough in plot, but sparkling with delicate realism in the treatment of character. Humor and sentiment blend inimitably in it. In Goldsmith's two comedies, "The Good-natured Man" and "She Stoops to Conquer," the cleverness of the drama of the Restoration seems revived; but the merry spirit is purer and tenderer. With the brilliant society dramas of Sheridan, "The School for Scandal" and "The Rivals," they constitute the most important dramatic work of the eighteenth century. Goldsmith's writings, as a whole, reveal a sensitive, emotional temperament; not assertive enough to escape the literary conventions around him, but strong enough to manifest itself even through acquiescence in these conventions. They have a grace, an ease, a gift of humor and tenderness, unknown to Johnson and his type of writers. Yet Johnson was the larger man; and Goldsmith, like most of his contemporaries, was submissive to the massive dictatorship of the great lexicographer.

"The Vicar of Wakefield," 1766.

"The Deserted Village," 1770.

"The Good-natured Man," 1768.

"She Stoops to Conquer," 1773.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1751-1816.

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Life of Goldsmith, Austin Dobson (Great Writers Series) bibliography at end. William Black (English Men of Letters). Charles Welsh (A Bookseller of the Last Century).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Boswell should be read as much as time permits. It is instructive to read the "Lives of the Poets," especially those which treat of authors familiar to the class, and to discuss Johnson's estimates. The critical standards and methods of the age of prose become well understood in this way. Simple capping of anecdotes about the great man may seem frivolous, but it is worth while.

Of course, "The Vicar of Wakefield" should be read entirely. It is a book to read rather than to analyze, however.

Personal character sketches are in order at this point of our literary history. It is useful for the students to make them, and literary gossip is more enticing perhaps, and more valuable here than at any previous point, because the material for personal knowledge of Johnson's famous contemporaries, especially of the members of the Literary Club, is so full.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

An hour may be spent in a reproduction of an evening at Johnson's club. A sort of story could be made of it, with sketches of the distinguished people present, and little biographies of them.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1744	SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1709–1784. Robert Blair, 1699–1746. "The Grave," 1743. Mark Akenside, 1721–1770. "Poems." THOMAS GRAY, 1716–1771. "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," 1747. "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," 1751. "Pindaric Odes," 1757. Etc. Tobias George Smollett, 1721–1771. (novelist). Laurence Sterne, 1713–1768. (novelist).	Voltaire. "Candide," 1757. Rousseau. "La Nouvelle Héloise," 1760. "Contrat Social," 1762. "Emile," 1764. Lessing. "Laokoön," 1766. "Minna von Barnhelm," 1767. "Emilia Galotti," 1772. Goethe. "Götz von Berlichingen," 1773. "Die Leiden des jungen Werthers," 1774. Emmanuel Swedenborg, 1689–1772.	Black Hole of Calcutta, 1756. Canada finally conquered by the English, 1759. British Museum opened, 1759. George III, 1760–1820. Wedgwood Potteries, estab. 1763. Spinning Jenny, invented, 1764. Stamp Act, 1765. James Watt, 1736–1819. (inventor). Act for taxing American imports, 1767. Royal Academy founded, 1768. Arkwright Spinning Machine, 1768. Wellington born, 1769.	University of Moscow, 1753. Columbia College, 1754. Earthquake at Lisbon, 1755. J. B. Greuze (p), 1725–1805. Brown University (Providence), 1764.
1760	James Macpherson, 1738–1796. "Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands," 1760. "Fingal," 1762. "Temora," 1763. Horace Walpole, 1717–1797. "The Castle of Otranto," 1764. "Letters." Etc. Thomas Percy, bp. of Dromore, 1728–1811. "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," 1765. OLIVER GOLDSMITH, 1728–1774.	Death of Voltaire, 1778. Death of Rousseau, 1778. Lessing. "Nathan der Weise," 1779.		Napoleon born, 1769.

YEAR	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
1760	Edmund Burke, 1729–1797. "The Present State of the Nation," 1769. Speeches. James Beattie, 1735–1803. "Encyclopædia Britannica," first ed., 3 vols., 1771.			
1770	"Letters of Junius," collected ed., 1772. ("Junius pointed out Milton's debt to Cædmon.") Anna Letitia Barbauld, 1743–1825. "Poems." Earl of Chesterfield, 1694–1773. "Letters to his Son," 1774. Thomas Warton, 1728–1790. "History of English Poetry," 1774–1778. Etc. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1751–1816. "The Rivals," 1775. "The School for Scandal," 1777. Etc. Edward Gibbon, 1737–1794. "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," 1776–1788. Etc. Adam Smith, 1723–1790. "An Inquiry into the Nature and		Sir Joshua Reynolds (p), 1723–1792. Gainsborough (p), 1727–1788. George Romney (p), 1734–1802. Beginning of great English Journals, 1771. Suicide of Lord Clive, 1774. War of American Independence begins, 1775.	Mozart, 1756–1791. Joseph Haydn, 1732–1809. Théatre Français opened, 1782. First Balloon, 1783. Bastile stormed, 1789.

	Causes of the Wealth of Nations," 1776. Etc. Thomas Chatterton, "The Marvellous Boy," 1752–1770. Collected works pub. in 1777, Frances Burney, 1752–1840. "Evelina," 1778. "Letters and Diaries," 1842, 1846. Etc.	Kant. "Kritik der reinen Vernunft," 1781. Schiller. "Die Rauber," 1781. "Don Carlos," 1787. Goethe. "Iphigenie," 1787. Kant. "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft," 1788. "Paul et Virginie," 1788.	Lord George Gordon riots, 1780. England acknowledges Independence of United States, 1782. William Pitt, Prime Minister, 1784–1806. Parliamentary Reform Bill, 1785. Impeachment of Warren Hastings, 1786.
1780	George Crabbe, 1754–1832. "The Library," 1781. "The Village," 1783. "Tales in Verse," 1812. Etc. (Crabbe was esteemed by the early revolutionary poets.) William Cowper, 1731–1800. "Table Talk," 1782. "The Task," 1785. "Translation of Homer," 1791. James Boswell, 1740–1795. "Journal to the Hebrides," 1785. "Life of Dr. Johnson," 1791. Etc.	Goethe. "Egmont," 1788. "Tasso," 1791. Kant. "Kritik der Urtheilskraft," 1791.	

1. Germany now rises above the literary horizon, and France sinks.

2. American dates appear, foreshadowing the American Revolution.

3. The Novelists: Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, Horace Walpole, Oliver Goldsmith, Frances Burney (Madame d'Arblay).

CHAPTER VII

THE INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT

I. Literature of Art

A STRANGE thing happened to the brilliant literature of the eighteenth century; the curse of stupidity fell upon it.

There is a certain irony about this fate. The century had aimed before all things at polish, lucidity, sparkle. In the pursuit of these it had forgotten all other matters; and its desires had largely been attained. The wits of Queen Anne's day had brought into literature the grace of the best society. Every one applauded, every one thought that new standards of correctness and of charm had been established for all time. But it was not so. The delightful play on the surface of life which pleases us in the age of Queen Anne ceases before the century is half over. At times a little of it lingers, as in the witty comedies of Goldsmith and Sheridan; but on the whole, the literature of the latter half of the century is very serious reading, and, if the truth must be told, often it is extremely dull.

The truth is, that new ways of saying things can charm us only a short time, unless there is something to say. When people prefer decorum to originality, they get either frivolous or tedious; and an

age which aims at form alone soon exhausts itself. The eighteenth century was emphatically such an age. Propriety, respectability, prevail in the literature produced under the Georges; and in the presence of this proper and respectable literature, we feel an irresistible desire to yawn.

Edward Young, for instance, who was a clever man, reclaimed an infidel in several books of rhymed arguments, which he called "Night Thoughts." Before we have half finished, we feel depraved sympathy for that unfortunate Infidel. Blair's "The Grave" and Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination" are other books of this class. It is possible to discover merits in both, particularly in Akenside, but no one is likely to do so unless he is obliged to read them. As for the sermons and didactic work, of which a large amount was produced in prose during the latter part of the century, only the stinging pen of the author of the "Dunciad" could do it justice. Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes" and his "Rasselas" are probably the best work of this kind that the age produced. There is real power in them, for they are the work of a strong mind; but they are not enlivening to read. Even the men of lighter temper, with instincts of the pure artist in them, feel the contagion; Goldsmith, in his most sensitive poetry, pauses to moralize and preach.

Edward Young, 1681–1765.
"Night Thoughts," 1742–1745.
Robert Blair, 1699–1746.
"The Grave," 1743.
Mark Akenside, 1721–1770.
"Pleasures of the Imagination," 1744.

II. Literature of Thought

Charm and refreshment are as a rule far to seek in later eighteenth-century literature. Yet the times were not dead; they did a solid, important work.

It was just the kind of work which one would expect from an age which had placed itself under the rule of the understanding. Art values are slight in it, but thought values are great; and the achievement of the unemotional, vigorous minds of that day had a large share in making the nineteenth century what it was. We must dismiss this intellectual work too briefly for its importance, but it must at least be mentioned.

Rise of history.

In the first place, as we run our eyes down the century, we notice, shortly after 1750, a very important appearance; that of modern history. Within about twenty-five years, a significant group of historians appears. The first is Hume, a great name whom every one knows; then Smollett, the novelist, who continued Hume's "History of England"; then Robertson, a Scotchman, as Hume was; and finally, the greatest of all, Gibbon, whose "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" belongs strictly to literature proper, so magnificently is it written, so truly is it a product of the synthetic imagination as well as of the constructive intellect.

David Hume, 1711–1776.

"History of England," 1754–1762.

Smollett's "A Complete History of England," 1757–1765.

William Robertson, 1721–1793.

Edward Gibbon, 1737–1794.

"The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," 1776–1788.

History had of course existed in England before this time, but it had been chiefly in the form of contemporary memoirs and chronicles. The new interest in actual life of the eighteenth century created and demanded more than this. Of course, the historians of that time had not the great help offered to their successors by modern evolutionary methods; we are all the more filled with admiration for them when we see what substantial, and in some cases abiding, work they accomplished without this help.

Philosophy and theology.

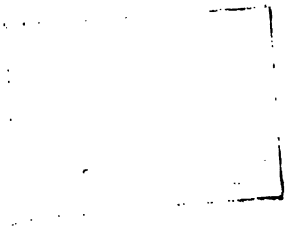
Even before history is fairly under way, we notice



EDMUND BURKE

1729-1797

After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



a strong, significant development of philosophical and theological writing. Here, too, the rationalist methods of the age had a great though partial work to do. Butler's "Analogy" was published nearly ten years before Pope's death. From this time, through the philosophical writings of Hume, to Paley's "Evidences," we have a number of books, some among them of almost the first importance, dealing, from an orthodox or a radical point of view, with religious and philosophical matters.

Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, 1692–1752.

"Analogy of Religion," 1736.

William Paley, 1745–1805.

"The Evidences of Christianity," 1794.

This new activity, this variety of thought, is yet more evident when we come to the next group, the political and economic writings of the times. Speculations of this order became especially prominent during the closing years of the century; we might say, after 1775. Doubtless our affairs here in America had something to do with this quickening of thought on political lines. We meet among writers in this group some of the same names as those in the other lines, for men of vigorous thought pass easily from history to politics, and from metaphysics to social philosophy. Also, we meet some new names. We find, as in religious discussion, many shades of opinion represented. We have the noble conservatism of Burke, the great statesman, the orator supreme in eloquence, — author, apart from his great and glowing political speeches and pamphlets, of the first important essay on æsthetics, in our literature. We have the instinct of radical social speculation in Adam Smith and Bentham. We have also the writings, of less intellectual worth, but with more power to make intellectual theories dynamic, of Thomas Paine. Finally, we

Political and economic writings.

Edmund Burke, 1729–1797.

Adam Smith, 1723–1790.

Jeremy Bentham, 1748–1832.

Thomas Paine, 1737–1809. William Godwin, 1756–1836.

have Godwin's "Political Justice," published in 1794; this may be taken as the last work of this class during the century, and with Paley's "Evidences" concludes the period.

III. The Trend of Thought

To discuss this large work in history, theology, philosophy, politics, and sociology would be out of our scope. But the student of letters should realize its importance. As we look back down the vista of the ages, these books, in the last half of the eighteenth century, stand out as an achievement. They were preparing the way for a revolution in art and life.

Current conservatism.

Conservatism was the order of the day in the eighteenth century. The violent challenge of existing authorities and institutions in which the seventeenth century had spent its force had grown repugnant to men. The Church became the accredited champion and guardian of the existing order, — a strange enough rôle for her to play, when one thinks of it. Politics had sunk largely into party strife for personal ends. People were all in a quiet frame of mind. They anticipated no grave changes, they had settled down into a pleasant loyalty to the constitutional monarchy and the Established Church.

Latent radical tendencies, religious and social.

Reassured in this way, men began to let the intellect travel where it liked, and it travelled into strange regions. Safe within the pale of outward conformity, developed slowly an immense speculative ardor. It started in England as far back as the times of Hobbes and Locke; it continued in the feeble but significant movement of the English deists during the closing

years of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. From England it journeyed to France, where two great men, Voltaire and Rousseau, carried it much farther toward scepticism in social and religious lines than sober England had done; Voltaire, in particular, pursuing his inquiries wherever they led with a keen audacity at which men held their breath. Then, from France, it came back again to England; Hume is, at least, as great a sceptic as Voltaire, and Godwin and Tom Paine carry the movement of inquiry to alarming if logical extremes in their social speculations.

The challenge of authority

So, if we look below the surface, we see that this most conservative of ages was also one of the most radical. Lulled by a false security, quickened by all the influences of a period which laid strong emphasis on clear and vigorous wits, men formed brand-new, startling theories of the state and of society. They challenged all authority, religious and social. It interested them to do this; they took a hearty, placid enjoyment in it. Their speculation does not seem particularly to have affected their practical relation to the system around them. Voltaire, the arch-sceptic, built a little church at Fernex, where the devout peasants still revere his memory. We find Hume, the adversary of Christianity, and Paley, its defender, both advising young men of free-thinking tendencies to take holy orders. Pope, the Roman Catholic, wrote uncriticised his deist "Essay on Man." In social theory the incongruity was equally great. The strange thing is that, whenever any definite controversy arose, the conservative forces were likely to get the best of the argument, yet these forces

themselves were becoming unconsciously suffused with the scepticism they meant to controvert.

So it came to pass that, while the Town played cards and flirted, and the Wits flavored their tea with personal satire, and the Moralists droned, the Thinkers were quietly putting up a row of question marks on the horizon. By and by the eyes of all men would be uplifted to that horizon, and then strange things might happen. Beneath all frivolity and outward stagnation new forces were seething. As yet, they appeared in the literature of thought only, not in the literature of art; but a touch of passion, and they would become active. Amazed enough would the thinkers have been could they have foreseen the near results of their intellectual freedom and their critical temper. But they could not foresee the nineteenth century, any more than the nineteenth was able to foresee the twentieth.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, esp. Vol. II, Ch. IX. Huxley, Life of Hume, English Men of Letters. Lecky, Life of Gibbon. Morley, Burke.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

A little reading should be done in the extremely dull authors mentioned in the first of the chapter, to give the students an added appreciation of the literature of the awakening that is to follow. The extracts in Ward's "English Poets" would suffice. The philosophical, historical, and sociological books discussed in the latter part of the chapter can hardly be attempted in class, though selections from Hume and Gibbon in Craik's "English Prose" might be read, and Burke is available and valuable reading for young people.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The hasty study in the text of the intellectual forces leading up to the Revolution might well be supplemented by a lecture which should trace more fully the growth of social theories during the eighteenth century. Stephen's "History," as given above, Morley's "Burke," "Diderot," "Rousseau," Royce's "Spirit of Modern Philosophy," will give ample material for such a lecture or series of lectures.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

FORCES of intellectual revolt had then been silently gathering all through the eighteenth century. But forces of emotional revolt had been gathering too, and by and by these two would meet. We trace these forces of emotional revolt through what is known as the "Romantic Revival."

The classic ideal is restrictive; it instinctively or deliberately adopts certain limits within which art is to aim at perfection. In this sense, the eighteenth century was really classic, for it was a restrictive period. The romantic ideal on the other hand is expansive, and in this chapter we are to trace the impulses making, even in this restrictive age, for freedom, and preparing the way for that great outbreak of romantic feeling in which the modern world was born. Passion, faith, wonder, had, as we know, been replaced by candor and common sense; it is their gradual return which we are to watch.

I. The Return to Nature

The first step in this process was the turning away from civilization to Nature. In the age of Queen Anne men's thoughts had centred wholly in the sophisticated society of the town; the marvel and beauty of the natural world were quite sealed to their

eyes. Pope, in the Preface to his "Pastorals," condemned Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar" because it gave a separate lyric to each month; the months were so much alike, said Pope, that the poet could not possibly find enough variety in them to inspire him. Things were not much better later in the century. We find Dr. Johnson snubbing Boswell, who had used some admiring adjective concerning a mountain they saw together in Scotland. "Sir," said the lexicographer, "it is a considerable protuberance." "The proper study of mankind is Man" was the prevailing sentiment, and the climax of such study was undoubtedly, in further words of Pope, "To catch the manners living as they rise."

James Thomson, 1700–1748.

But just at the turn of the second quarter of the century, a poet appeared who began to show people that the country was worth looking at. His name was James Thomson. It is curious to note that he was a Scotchman, when we remember that the last considerable development of the poetry of Nature had been with the Scottish poets of the fifteenth century. Thomson's "Seasons" were a new departure in form, for Thomson used blank verse instead of the all-prevalent heroic couplet. They were a yet greater departure in substance, for they contained much deliberate description of Nature in her different aspects. Thomson's descriptions deal a great deal in enumeration unfused with personal passion; he shows little selective instinct for what is beautiful. He dwells more on Nature's use to man than on her beauty. He shares the mechanical idea of his day, which regarded the universe not as a living whole, but as a great system or order of nicely adjusted parts, wit-

"Winter," 1726.

"Summer," 1727.

"Spring," 1728.

"The Seasons," including "Autumn" and a "Hymn to Nature," 1730.

nessing by the ingenuity of its plan to the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator. But if Thomson's work is heavy it is truly felt. He really loved the country and looked straight at it, and that is more than any other man was doing at the time.

"Liberty," 1734–1736.

Thomson was a young man, under thirty, when he wrote "The Seasons." He grew duller as he grew older. His long poem, "Liberty," was so uninteresting that even the eighteenth century and his personal friends found it hard reading; and his "Tragedies," of which he wrote several, were also poor. But in 1748 appeared a poem, written fifteen years earlier, which showed even more genius than "The Seasons." This was an imitation of Spenser, called "The Castle of Indolence," a dreamy, romantic, allegorical narrative full of charm. It has lines like these: —

"The Castle of Indolence," 1748.

> "A wood
> Of blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
> Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood," —

lines which sound like a fragment of Tennyson, wandering forlorn in the age of Johnson.

II. Quickening of the Imagination

In the second quarter of the century, the new forces found more varied and significant exponents than Thomson, in William Collins and Thomas Gray. The impulse of Thomson was toward observation and reflection; the impulse of these two greater poets was purely imaginative. They were lyric poets in an age of prose and singsong; and while the seesaw of the heroic couplet

went on, melodies of intricate and studied loveliness formed on their lips. They were men of a feeling for Greece finer and more sincere than that of the other writers of their day, yet they were both driven by an imperious inward stress to dwell upon the wild, remote, and "gothick" dreams of the visionary ancestors of their race. They wrote classic odes, therefore, with exquisite instinct for lucidity and precision of form, but we find Collins producing also an "Ode on the Superstitions of the West Highlands," full of the thrill of mystery which the taste of his day so disliked; and Gray turned, in his later years, with the ardor of a mystic to the grim unknown mythology of the North. The whole achievement of Collins and Gray, slight as it is in bulk, is full of contending influences, and it has, therefore, a psychological interest which we do not often find in eighteenth-century verse.

William Collins, 1721–1759

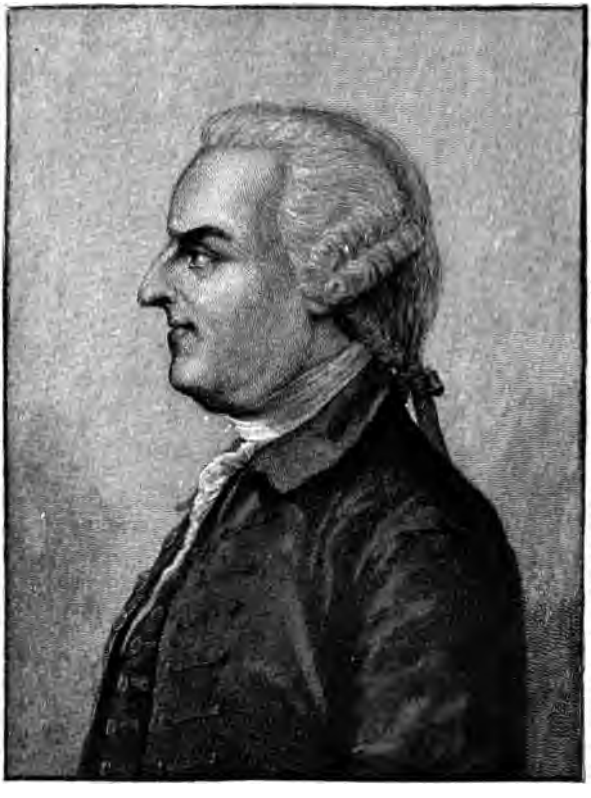
One is sorry for both these men. One feels that the air of the eighteenth century stifled them; and indeed the very smallness of their product would imply that their powers were choked at the source. Collins wrote even less than Gray, and his life was tragic. He was educated at Oxford, and printed a little volume of "Persian Eclogues," when he was still an undergraduate; when he was twenty-five years old, appeared a tiny pamphlet, every poem of which, had the public only known, was of pure gold. Here is the famous "Ode to Evening," and "The Passions," and the exquisite lyric, "How sleep the brave who sink to rest." The book, at the time, failed to sell, and Collins destroyed the edition. He was to give the world little more. His feeling for

Thomson found expression in some charming elegiac verses; in 1749 the great "Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands" was written. But terrible melancholy, which travel proved hopeless to dispel, was gaining on Collins; in 1751 he became hopelessly insane, and his death found him almost forgotten even by his friends.

Thomas Gray, 1716–1771.

It is a sad story, yet hardly sadder than the more quiet story of the life of Gray. For Gray spent over thirty years of his life in shrinking seclusion at Cambridge, a prey to depression, which, if milder than that of Collins, yet cast a dim shadow over his days. He was a man of a tender and sensitive nature, devoted to his mother and his aunt, ardent if at times exacting in friendship, and one of the most modern men in the whole temper of his mind that the eighteenth century shows. "He never spoke out," says Matthew Arnold. Gray's product is, if we except Collins's, the smallest from any English poet of the first quality, or even of the second, and a poet of at least the second quality we must recognize in the writer of an "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." He is probably the most important poetic figure in our literature between Pope and Wordsworth.

Gray received his education at Eton and Cambridge. He formed a friendship with Horace Walpole, a dilettante man of letters of the day, and a good-hearted, if rather frivolous, person. With Walpole he spent three years travelling in France and Italy, at the end of which time he quarrelled, though only temporarily, with his friend, and returned to settle down at Cambridge for the rest of



THOMAS GRAY
1716-1771



his life. Gray is the most purely academic of all our great poets, and his natural nicety of ear was fostered by strict classic studies. He wrote while still young a few short lyrics, which he called odes, poems full of delicate art, but somewhat frigid and conventional. In 1750, he finished the "Elegy," begun eight years before. Another lapse of years, marked only by trifles, and we find him producing two Pindaric odes which are probably the noblest poems of this precise class in the language, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard." The splendid harmonies of these poems doubtless prepared the way for the lyrics of Coleridge and Shelley. Still a few years, and Gray had become possessed with the ancient poetry of the North, particularly of Iceland, and was versifying poems from the "Edda," with the same sort of enthusiasm that William Morris has shown in our own day. Though study without genius could never have produced Gray's poems, genius without study would have been equally incapable. This is just as true of the "Elegy," despite its careful simplicity in style and theme, as of the poems upon the more scholastic subjects. All Gray's poetry is exquisitely wrought in detail; in tone it is subdued, although at times very lofty. It has a truly classic sense for style, and a truly romantic choice of subject.

"Elegy in a Country Churchyard," 1751.

Gray's Letters and Journal are as charming as his poetry, and show even more clearly how susceptible he was to the new, delicate feeling for Nature. Some of the descriptive phrases in his letters are worthy of Shelley. Gray's whole work is prophetic of what is to be; but it is more than prophecy, it is a triumphant, if limited, achievement.

III. Literary Revivals

The third quarter of the century was barren of any new creative work; but as it went on, a reviving tide of life from the romantic past began to creep over the arid minds of the day. There were three currents in it. The first showed in the numerous imitations of Spenser. "The Castle of Indolence" bore witness, in quite another way than that we have noted, to the indestructibility of the romantic tradition, for it was written in the Spenserian stanza, and in direct imitation of Spenser. This reversion to the prince of romance means a great deal. For half a century Waller, Denham, and Cowley had been the poetic authorities most constantly cited; now, the spell of Faerie Land began to assert itself once more. Shenstone's "Schoolmistress" was another imitation, and later in the century, in 1771, Beattie's "Minstrel" gave in Spenser's stanza a touching picture of the life of a young poet. There were other less important poems of the same class.

William Shenstone's "The Schoolmistress," 1737, 1742.

James Beattie's "The Minstrel," 1771, 1774.

Ballads.

The second current flowed from the enthusiasm for old English ballads. Addison had liked ballads and defended them, but against the taste of his time. Now, in 1765, the publication of a volume of "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," a collection made by Bishop Percy, fairly brought the ballads back into popular favor. The most interesting consequence to follow at once in the world of letters was the work of Thomas Chatterton, a boy of genius, who tried to palm off his own productions on the public as the work of a mediæval monk named Rowley. Chatterton committed suicide when only seventeen years old,

Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, 1728–1811.

"Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," 1765.

Thomas Chatterton, 1752–1780.

and later poets have never ceased to lament the fate of "The sleepless soul that perished in his pride," as Wordsworth called him.

Still more searching and pervading at this time was another influence, the strangest that could possibly be conceived as invading the eighteenth century. It was that of the wild old Celtic epic of Finn and Ossian. In 1760, and again in 1762 and 1763, a Scotch schoolmaster, James Macpherson, astonished the world with what he claimed to be translations from the ancient Ossianic poems. They were a new flavor to the jaded appetites of the day, and they gained notoriety at once. Soon the genuineness of the poems was called in question, and people in England and Europe came almost to blows over the question. The whole story of Macpherson's "Ossian" is one of the most romantic episodes of literary history. Of course, we know to-day that he did not invent the whole thing; that there was, both in Scotland and Ireland, a cycle of poems about Finn and Ossian of which he doubtless possessed some knowledge. But we know also that the primitive old epic motifs look strangely when translated into the bombastic, misty, sentimental language which Macpherson adopted, and that his version, if version it may be called, is a curious hybrid thing, which has little value for us now that we have so many original documents in our hands. Even diluted, however, the Celtic magic proved immensely powerful in helping to transform the mood and taste of the eighteenth century, in Europe as well as in England.

Ossianic revival.

James Macpherson, 1738–1796.

Macpherson's "Ossian," 1760, 1762, 1763.

The vogue of Spenserian imitations, of old ballads, and of Macpherson's "Ossian" were by no means the

only symptoms that a new spirit was stirring. Gray's friend Horace Walpole, built himself a country house at Strawberry Hill where all the bizarre absurdities of a half-understood imitation Gothic held merry riot. He also bequeathed a more enduring monument of the change of taste, in a romance called the "Castle of Otranto," which he presented in 1764 to the bewildered world. This extraordinary little book, which reads like a burlesque on a mediæval novel of Scott's, valiantly set at defiance the virile tradition of realism in fiction which Fielding and Smollett had by this time established. Its aim was the improbable, its delight the preposterous; and mammoth helmets, clanging armor, and ghostly voices made up a sort of charivari of pleasing and wholly unmotived horrors. The type proved popular, and was followed after a milder and slightly more rational manner by Mrs. Radcliffe in her "Mysteries of Udolpho" and "Children of the Forest," and by other authors of less repute.

The Gothic revival.

Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, 1717–1797.

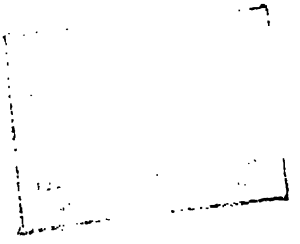
"The Castle of Otranto," 1764.

IV. The Methodist Movement

We have seen how poetry was turning, for its inspiration, away from the town and the present to Nature and the past. But another power greater than these was at work in England. It was the power of spiritual passion, bringing with it the love for men. Strangely blind as educated England seemed in these days to all but worldly issues, the English race is profoundly religious at heart, and in the most sterile times of her experience the Spirit has never been without witnesses. Such a witness



WILLIAM COWPER
1731-1800



was William Law, whose "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," published in 1729, was a strange outburst of earnest feeling in a frivolous age. But a profound spiritual movement sprang up soon after Law's day, and ran its great course apart from the keen wits and the Established Church of the time. While the deists and their clever orthodox opponents combined to prepare the way for modern scepticism, the Methodist movement, led by the Wesleys, was keeping Christianity warm and living at the nation's heart.

William Law, 1668–1761.

"Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," 1729.

John Wesley, 1703–1791.

Charles Wesley, 1708–1788.

Methodism did not have at once much visible influence on literature, though the fervent hymns of the Wesleys are among the few genuine lyrics of the age; but its indirect effect in softening the hearts of the nation and preparing the way for the tender sense of brotherhood among all men cannot be estimated. And the last harbinger of the modern world among the eighteenth-century poets reflects in his work this spiritual movement, with its social correlate. William Cowper is one of the most pathetic, endearing, and tragic figures of English letters. He was not a man of so much imagination as Gray or Collins; his was the poetry of a sensitive and tender heart, and it marks the return of true, simple feeling into our literature.

William Cowper, 1731–1800.

Cowper adds yet another to the many writers of the century whose lives were miserable. The number of these unhappy men is appalling. Genius does not necessarily render unhappy. One is sure that Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, loved to be alive, however deep they might at one time or another plunge into anguish. Nor would one dare to call Milton

unhappy, remembering what lofty idealism sustained him. But neither Swift nor Collins nor Chatterton nor Cowper loved to be alive; Johnson and Gray, though their fate was of a less tragic order, suffered from what would to-day be considered pathological melancholia; the same thing is true of various minor men. It is a strange comment on the craving for equanimity and hatred of extremes of that complacent age, that its most sensitive sons were pursued by madness.

Cowper's life.

Cowper was a contemporary of Blake and Burns; but there was enough of the pedestrian gait of the eighteenth century in his work to justify us in treating him first, before we come to those winged ones. It was not till youth was over, and he had known an experience of deep agony, that he became a poet. The first attack of the terrible mental malady, from which he suffered all his life at recurring intervals, came upon him in 1763, as a result of his horror at the ordeal of an examination which he was expected to pass. His illness then, as ever, took the form of despair of the mercy of God. It was impossible hereafter for him to know an active life; his friends arranged for him to live in the country. In little villages near the river Ouse, Cowper spent, from this time, a life of religious and domestic seclusion with dear friends at his side. There were many gentle, happy days in the intervals of his malady; and, like many melancholy people, he could be a charming and sunshiny and humorous companion, as his lines on John Gilpin, and his letters about his pet hares and other diversions abundantly testify.

Hymns.

Cowper's first poems were certain hymns which he

contributed to the little volume of "Olney Hymns," written by himself and by his pastor and spiritual guide, John Newton. "Oh, for a closer walk with God" and "God moves in a mysterious way" are the most familiar. Two or three years later he began to compose didactic and satirical pieces in the fashion of the day. These are not without merit, but they are quite thrown in the shade by his longer poem, "The Task." This, with a handful of short poems, of which the "Lines written on Receipt of My Mother's Picture" is the most beautiful, form his title to fame.

"The Task," 1785.

At times "The Task" seems to us as didactic and heavy and prosy as any poem the eighteenth century produced, and we are tempted to lay it down in weariness. But something makes us continue, and the longer we read the more aware we grow that in this wandering poem are the notes of a new era.

In the first place, it is one of the first poems in which we have a simple, intimate self-revelation, such as gives charm to so much of the poetry of the nineteenth century, from Wordsworth's "Prelude" to Tennyson's "In Memoriam." Most of the verse of the eighteenth century is impersonal, but Cowper lets us into his confidence and allows us to feel the personality behind the verse.

Then, the poem is full of a feeling for Nature, far more tender and modern than that of Thomson. Cowper does not care for wild nature. He gives us no rushing cataracts like those loved by Wordsworth, but the sluggish little river Ouse, near which he lived; no up-leaping mountains, but wide, placid

English fields, such as stretched around his cherished Olney; no mystery of enchanted woodland, but a garden and greenhouse in which the cucumbers are, one feels, as great a pleasure to him as the syringas or the roses. We are forced to confess that he is utilitarian at times. But this homely, quiet Nature he loved and described with close fidelity, and at times with a true poetic touch. There are three great relations that man can hold: the relation to God, to Nature, to his fellow-men. We feel assured in reading "The Task" that the second of these relations is at last for the first time fully apprehended as a poetic subject.

The third relation also is conceived, though faintly, in a new way by Cowper. His landscape has single figures in it, — the poor, wandering woman, the postman, the thresher, — that are quite in the later manner. Moreover, his poem breathes, with its strong religious passion, a love for humanity and for freedom wholly alien to anything to be found, let us say, in Pope. Even inferior creation, the animal world, is treated by Cowper with a loving sympathy such as had never been known before. There is nothing very vivid in "The Task"; the fulness of life and beauty, so soon to be revealed in Nature and humanity, it was not given to Cowper to feel. All his work is a twilight piece, but its gentle sweetness and true insight endear it to us, and give it a permanent place in English letters.

"Translation of Homer," 1791.

Cowper attempted one more long piece of work, a translation of Homer. He tried to be more faithful than Pope, and succeeded; but he did not master that elusive secret of Homer which has baffled all

translators. He lived till 1800, surviving the dear old friend, Mrs. Unwin, with whom he had lived in domestic comfort for many years, and whose gradual decline he had watched with the tender sorrow which finds touching expression in the lines "To Mary." His last days were sorrowful, yet we need not think of sorrow when we think of Cowper; we may think of one of the most winning, most tender, and sweetest natures that our literature has known.

REFERENCE BOOKS

W. PHELPS, Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement. BEERS's English Romanticism, eighteenth century. GOSSE's edition of the prose and verse of Gray. Editions of Gray, Collins, Cowper, in the Athenæum Press Series, with Introductions. GOSSE, Life of Gray. Essays on Gray, MATTHEW ARNOLD, LOWELL. Cowper, Life, by GOLDWIN SMITH. Introduction to selections in Golden Treasury Series, by Mrs. OLIPHANT. Life of Horace Walpole, by AUSTIN DOBSON. See esp. the description of Strawberry Hill. Centenary edition of OSSIAN's Poems, ed. by WILLIAM SHARP (Patrick Geddes, Edinburgh). PERCY's Reliques. STOPFORD BROOKE, Theology in the English Poets, has interesting treatment of Cowper.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

This is perhaps a time when the historic estimate (see Matthew Arnold, on the "Study of Poetry") is more important than the real estimate, for it is a period of promise and transition, less great in itself than periods which precede and follow, but extremely significant in literary evolution. Readings from Thomson, Gray, Collins, Cowper, should be carried on with the aim of sensitiveness to the romantic elements in their work, whether new or revived. Also the respects in which their work conforms to the tastes and standards of their times should be noted. The awakening feeling for Nature should be traced. The influence of the Greek at first hand should be noted in Gray and Collins, and the advance toward full romanticism

followed. One poem, preferably the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," should be exhaustively studied, stanza by stanza, with notice of epithet, pause melody, sentiment, and all detail. Special topics may be given on Cowper's pets, on Gray's feeling for Nature.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

If time permits, a lecture on any one of these men individually is full of value. The aim should be to trace in their work the interplay of old and new, and also to interest the students in their personalities.



PART V

MODERN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE HERALDS: BURNS AND BLAKE

I. The New Notes

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best."

"The moon like a flower
In Heaven's high bower
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night."

Where do these voices come from, with their sweet and tender melody? From the fourteenth century? No, surely. From the sixteenth? The answer hesitates a little, but dares not quite say Yes. From the seventeenth? Hesitation still. From the eighteenth? Probably the reply sounds clear, No, not from the eighteenth, not from the century of Pope and Johnson, of satire, reason, and prose.

Yet these two poems were both written within the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The author of the first was a Scottish yeoman named Robert Burns; the author of the second, a poor London artist, William Blake. Their words come to the traveller through the cheerless air of the eighteenth

century with a fresh, delightful surprise. These are the heralds of a new order; song-birds of the dawn, proclaiming the rise of a new day.

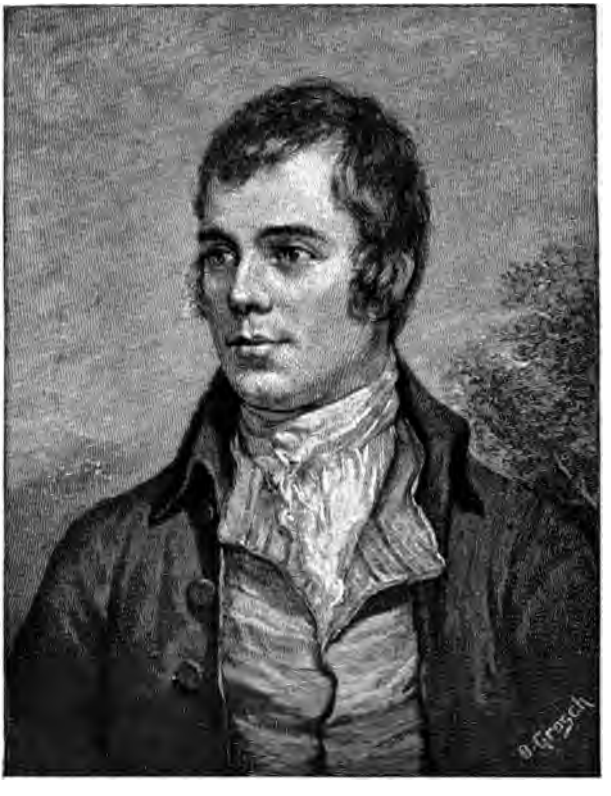
What makes the poetry of these two men so different from what had gone before? Let us look at them and see.

II. Robert Burns

Burns's life, 1759–1796.

Robert Burns was born in a cottage built by his father's hands in Ayrshire, Scotland. He had little schooling, and was when a boy farm laborer on his father's farm; poor all his life, with a poverty that sadly deepened toward the end. Not much need be said of his biography; it is written in his poems. He was of an emotional temperament, — too emotional, — and few grave duties or high imaginings came in his way to satisfy his passions and prevent them from feeding on crude self-indulgence. But his nature was rooted firm in sincerity and honor. He won his first fame when he was twenty-seven years old by a volume of poems for which he received twenty pounds; he was fêted in Edinburgh, and the false taste of the times spoiled some of his verses; but he was always simple at heart. He married one of his many early loves, Jean Armour, and settled down into the life of a farmer; but failing to succeed was appointed exciseman, and moved to the town of Dumfries, where he died, worn out by dissipation and anxiety, in 1796. He had lived thirty-seven years, and dowered Scotland with immortal store of song.

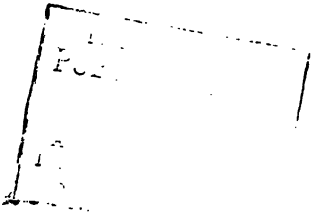
We see that Burns's life was all lived within



ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

After the painting by Alexander Nasmyth



the limits of the eighteenth century, but apart from its conditions. In his work the Celt appears once more in our literature, bringing with him the precious gift which he always proffers: sensitive emotion, tremulous melody, natural magic. He sings of the elementary realities of life, which the school of artifice had well-nigh forgotten. Open his poems and note his range of subject. Here two dogs, inimitably described, chat about the affairs of their masters; here the "wee, sleekit, tim'rous, cowerin' beastie," frightened by the plough, scampers away with a panic in her breastie; here we are introduced to the auld mare Maggie, or to Mailie, the dying sheep. Again, we turn with relief from Thomson's "polyanthus with unnumbered dyes" to a wee crimson-tipped daisy. On Saturday night we watch the peasant family gathering after the healthy labors of the week for an evening of affection and rest. Or we find ourselves with a little shock in a less decorous gathering, among the Jolly Beggars in a deserted barn, and hear them troll out their lawless melodies. We see poor Tam o' Shanter, riding post-haste on his old gray horse, while a rout of witches chase him in the Scottish twilight. Even the devil is not excluded from this sociable democracy of feeling; the devil of folk-lore, mediæval in origin, a malicious but not wholly unattractive companion.

Burns's range of subject.

> "O Prince! O Chief of many throned powers
> That led th' embattled Seraphim to war —"

so had Milton apostrophized his melancholy, majestic Satan: —

"O Thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,"

responds Burns, with cheerful and unparalleled audacity, and ends the poem with a wistful hint of friendly compassion.

Finally, we find in Burns's poems the loveliest lyrics since the great days of the sixteenth century. Little, tender, unelaborated things they are, written to match the old melodies of the land, and they sing themselves into the heart and nestle there. They are spontaneous in feeling as the lyrics of the Renaissance, but they have a more human passion. Treating mostly of love, some of them yet thrill with patriotic ardor or with convivial pleasure, with defiance of the rich, it may be, or better, with a new, deep instinct, half realized, for freedom and brotherhood.

Significance of Burns's poetry.

This poetry of Burns, in its dialect of lowland Scotch, is the full outpouring of the warm, superstitious, homely life of the peasant people. It has defects enough, and grave ones, the same defects that stain the life of the poet. His ardent nature was not fed much by knowledge or by art; he did not think very much, any more than those for whom he sang, and the spiritual values of life were but slightly known to him. "Burns is a beast, with splendid gleams," wrote Matthew Arnold. But surely this is too harsh a verdict. What we value in Burns is the revelation of the worth of the primitive experiences common to all men, the natural passion, the consciousness of a life lived, not sentimentally, but substantially close to the heart of Nature. He

demonstrates that these common, simple experiences are the stuff of poetry; for he sings them in verse of irresistible charm. We love Burns also for the spirit of democracy that pervades his work. Although sometimes he strikes the note of class antagonism in a painful way, now and again this spirit finds ringing, direct expression: —

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
A man's a man for a' that."

The sentiment is trite enough to-day, yet it still strikes home to our hearts, because it came so freshly from the heart of Burns.

III. William Blake

Burns brought our poetry back from artifice and decorum to the warm and homely life of earth. Blake escaped from this world almost altogether into the free air of spiritual mysticism. Burns restored passion to the lyric; Blake summoned to its inspiration the long-exiled imagination. "All things exist in the human imagination," was a strange, brief, pregnant saying of his. People called William Blake insane; so perhaps in a sense he was; but there are those who think that his madness knew more truth than the sanity of his age. 1757–1827.

Blake was a little London boy; and his father, who was a hosier, gave him small education beyond reading and writing. But the child had no lack of experiences. Once he came home from his walk and told his parents that he had seen a tree full of angels. His father whipped him, but he would not Blake's personality.

take it back. All his life long he was haunted by visions. "When the sun rises," said some one to him, "do you not see a round disk of fire something like a guinea?" "Oh, no, no," he replied; "I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty.'"

> "We are led to believe a lie
> When we see with, not through, the eye,"

he says again, and those who know what he means in this couplet will understand his poetry.

It was natural that this vision-seeing boy should have turned to the arts that render beauty visible. He was fascinated by painting and by Gothic architecture, and became himself an artist, though most of his work was in the unambitious branch of engraving. Blake's work in art was valued more highly by the nineteenth century than by his contemporaries. Some of it, like his illustrations for the Book of Job, has an imaginative power at times sublime.

Poetical sketches, 1783.

Most of the poems of Blake which we care for to-day are in two little volumes, the "Songs of Innocence" and the "Songs of Experience." He printed them himself, as he did nearly all his books, and they can still be seen at the British Museum and elsewhere. Sunset colors flush across their pages, and they are full of melodies, sweet as those of Burns, but with more elfin undertones. The "Songs of Innocence" is a book of verse about children. Children had not interested the eighteenth century, but they interested Blake. It seems as if he had caught and translated for us the first tremblings of con-

"Songs of Innocence," 1789.

sciousness in a baby's soul in some of these verses; in nearly all we feel that he has given us the true spiritual secret in the heart of the child. What a journey from Gray's Pindaric odes to these little songs! Yet they are not so far separated in time. The "Songs of Experience" correspond to the "Songs of Innocence," but where the first give the fair light, these give the shadow. We have the tiger for the lamb, we have sorrow for joy, and instead of innocence a shuddering perception of sin throbs through the verses.

"Songs of Experience," 1793.

Blake also wrote what he called his Prophetical Books, a series of extraordinary visions in strange, rhythmical prose. These books are for the most part unintelligible to the ordinary reader, but every now and then a passage flashes out, of profound beauty or meaning. When we do not understand Blake, the fault may often be ours rather than his. For he was a deep and audacious thinker. He was filled with a passionate longing for true social freedom and justice. He has no thrilling democratic manifesto like Burns's defiant "A man's a man for a' that," but a sweeping phrase of his, "Everything that lives is holy," proclaims with power that has never been excelled the central spiritual truth on which democracy rests. The misery of the poor was heavy on his heart: —

Prophetical Books: *e.g.* "Jerusalem," "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," "Urizen."

Blake's democracy.

> "The beggar's rags fluttering in air
> Do to rags the heavens tear,"

he exclaims. He is perhaps the first English poet to be filled with the social idealism that looks for the coming of God's kingdom on earth; four lines of

his have been taken for the motto of a modern socialist paper: —

> "I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land."

Blake's mysticism.

Despite his speculative ardor and audacity and his defiance of law, Blake was a man of intense faith.

> "If the sun and moon should doubt,
> They'd immediately go out,"

he naïvely tells us. All things to him were charged with spiritual meaning; the emblems or symbols of mysterious forces. To quote his own words for the last time, he can teach us —

> "To see a world in a grain of sand
> And a heaven in a wild flower,
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour."

REFERENCE BOOKS

The Cambridge Burns, edited by HENLEY. Selections from Burns, Athenæum Press Series. Life of Burns, by SHAIRP (English Men of Letters), by BLACKIE (Great Writers Series). Essays on Burns by CARLYLE and STEVENSON.

Selections from BLAKE, edited by WM. M. ROSSETTI. Selections, Canterbury Poets. Life, by GILCHRIST. Monograph, by SWINBURNE, WM. B. YEATS, Ed., with Memoir and interpretation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

If possible, let Burns's songs be sung to the class. Study the life of peasant Scotland as inferred from his poetry; the new democracy, as expressed by him; the noble and ignoble elements in his genius. Compare his lyrics with those of the sixteenth century; with the poetry of Pope.

Let the class see any of Blake's drawings that are accessible. The "Songs of Innocence" and the "Songs of Experience" are delightful to read with a class.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW DEMOCRACY

I. Review of Forces making for Democracy

TO explain the poetry of Blake and Burns, we have had to use a great word which we have rarely needed before. It is the word "democracy." Without that word we cannot go a step farther, for through the power of democracy nearly all the literature of the last century was developed.

We have glanced at the forces that all through the eighteenth century were making for a new order. The novel has shown us how people were coming to take as much interest in the lives of ordinary men and women as in those of kings and queens and heroes. The poetry of the romantic revival has suggested how deep was becoming the restiveness under restraint and convention; and we have found, now and then, a sensitive person who begins to draw away a little critically from civilization, and to find his pleasure in simple life lived close to the heart of Nature. Meanwhile, the thinkers, both in France and England, have begun to challenge authority of all kinds in the Church and in the State; and before the end of the century, a definite theory, daring in the extreme, has been put forth. It is the theory that all men have equal rights, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that simple manhood is in itself a sacred thing. As early as 1776 the Declara-

tion of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, and the new ideal — for, trite though it seems to us to-day, men hailed it then as new — had entered the arena of action. But it still took some time for democratic theory to possess with full force the world of letters. When this happened, it re-created literature.

Literature needed quickening badly enough, for all the old motives and inspirations seemed exhausted. The enthusiasm for perfection of form had, as we have seen, worn itself out; realism was declining upon conventionality. The truth is,— and it is a truth which critics of the school of Addison never surmised, — literature cannot live long unless it is nourished by great ideals. Such ideals the eighteenth century could not supply, nor did it suspect that any were in reserve.

II. The French Revolution and Literature

Yet all the time, an ideal as great as any that the Christian world has ever known was silently on its way: the love of humanity and of freedom, and the belief that this shall one day transform the earth. That the new passion and faith were astir in people's hearts before any outward events wakened them is evident from the poetry of Blake and Burns; for the genius of both these men had declared itself before 1789, when the fall of the Bastille in Paris gave the signal of a general quickening. But democratic ardor was stimulated and freed more than we can estimate by the great outbreak of the French Revolution. The eighteenth century ended

in the most dramatic passage of history that the world had seen for many a hundred years. And out of that great drama of death and birth arose three noble words: "liberty, equality, fraternity." This is the revolutionary formula, the revolutionary creed. It has taken men more than a century to understand those words, and we have not finished learning our lesson yet.

Poor France was too occupied by the swift and amazing events which followed each other through the last decade of the century to express in poetry the new forces that were shaking her to her centre. But the English on their island had sufficient detachment to translate experience into art. Revolutionary thought and passion permeate all the countries of Europe in the early nineteenth century, but perhaps there is no literature which is so wholly possessed by them as that of England.

The Revolution seen through Wordsworth's "Prelude."

We can study the progress of the revolutionary drama in a poem by one of the great English poets of this period: "The Prelude," by William Wordsworth.

The very form of the poem is suggestive of the new interest in the individual which democracy brought with it; for it is a long autobiography in verse. "The Prelude" is much like Cowper's "Task" in some ways; but it lets the personal interest, which in the "Task" slips in surreptitiously, frankly be the centre of the poem. Moreover, it has more passion and enthusiasm than the "Task"; and at times it soars into a higher poetic heaven than the gentle muse of Cowper ever entered. It is a "Task" with wings.

Wordsworth opens "The Prelude" with some books of very great beauty, in which he describes his childhood among the lakes and hills of Cumberland, the English lake district. Then he tells us of his English education at the University of Cambridge: then how he went to France during the revolutionary period, a shy, mountain-bred boy; and step by step he traces the effect of the great national drama of the Revolution on his spirit. A few glimpses of the Revolution through the mind of Wordsworth will make us understand better what was happening to all the men of his age.

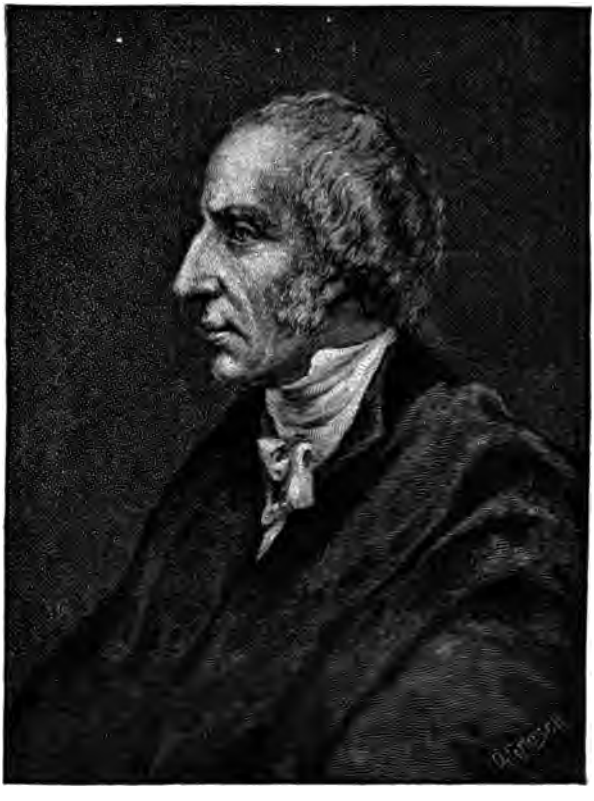
Early revolutionary idealism.

When Wordsworth first visited France, the Revolution was well under way, and it was in its earliest, happiest stage: —

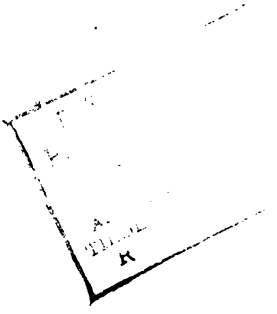
> "Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
> France standing on the top of golden hours,
> And human nature seeming born again."

For there was a brief period at the beginning when it really seemed as if the Goddess of Justice had returned to earth again as the old myth promised, and as if brotherly love were going to rule this old earth. Wordsworth, a lad of twenty at this time, made his way across a pleasant France, noting "how bright a face is worn when joy of one is joy for tens of millions," joining in dances of Liberty and happy feasts in the villages, and finding benevolence and blessedness spread everywhere like a fragrance. The whole country throbbed with an ecstatic sense of escape.

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very Heaven,"



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
1770-1850



sighs the poet, remembering those fair days. Indeed, the spirit of a mighty hope had taken possession of the world; no less a hope, Wordsworth tells us, than to realize on earth a perfect society. The whole earth seemed to him at that time, he says, a new-fallen inheritance, all his own, which he studied with a delight that was glad to note even the worst and most unhappy things in society, because it would be such joy to watch them suddenly disappear.

It was a wonderful dream; so wonderful that Europe has not forgotten it to this day, and there are some who still hold it prophetic. But in the world of fact it did not last. The people, long oppressed by the nobles in France, had begun at last to realize their power; restraints had been removed, and reverence for the past had been shaken. From a period of ideal optimism, the Revolution in France passed, suddenly it seemed to Europe watching aghast, into the wild excesses of the Reign of Terror. Crimes were perpetrated in the name of liberty and justice. The forces of destruction latent in that young democracy had it all their own way. It took Europe more than one generation to recover from the nervous shock of those days. Other great and dreadful events followed: wars devastated Europe; England was hurried into the vortex; and finally, revolutionary France, rent, tossed, lawless, fell under the military despotism of the first Napoleon. The First Empire, with its emphasis on physical power, its thirst for material dominion and for glory of conquest, seemed to most thoughtful people a tragic anticlimax after that so recent cry, liberty, equality, fraternity.

Reaction: The Reign of Terror.

Wordsworth shared deeply the suffering, the shock, the moral disillusion of the time. Full of compassion for "the abject multitude," he had believed that their sorrows would be ended when the absolute rule of a monarch should be abolished, and the people should have a strong hand in framing their own laws. But when that time came, the people proved unworthy of his trust; in the fevered politics of the day the issue between right and wrong seemed obscured. A sense of horror overwhelmed him as he brooded over the crimes and violence of Paris; the city, hushed and silent at midnight, yet seemed to him a place defenceless as a wood where tigers roamed; and his sleep was haunted by dreams of innocent victims in their agony.

He used to wonder at this time — so simple did the matter still appear to childlike minds — if he himself, a youth, a foreigner, unknown and obscure, might not turn the tide once more to righteousness if he plunged into the arena of politics. But he was not allowed to try his *naïf* plan. He returned to England; and there events as they developed toward the Empire yet further afflicted his spirit, and he passed into a dejection so profound that not only his social idealism and his republicanism, but his faith in God and man, seemed swept away.

Disillusion and despair.

We cannot stop to trace the process by which his pure, sensitive spirit recovered its sanity and its belief; that belongs to his story, not to the story of the Revolution. Recover them he did in a measure, though a glory had left the earth, never to return. But we have been dwelling on his experience up to this point because it is typical. All the great poets

who were his contemporaries grew up in the presence of the astounding drama with which the nineteenth century opened. In every one may be discerned the play of its clashing forces and contending ideals. The Revolution knew three phases. First, an ardent and generous hope for the freedom of all men and the establishment of the perfect state on earth thrilled through the nation. Then came a sudden reaction, and the avenging wrath of the people leaped upward like a conflagration, destroying the old world as by fire. Finally came, so far as thoughtful people were concerned, a collapse into exhaustion and discouragement, while the early revolutionary ideals translated themselves into a lust for material power under the hand of Napoleon. All Europe watched this drama breathlessly, and every writer of the first third of the century was, according to his temperament, imbued with the lofty hopes, the lawless passion, or the discouragement experienced by the nations.

Summary.

III. English Poets of the Revolution

The revolutionary poets in England fall into three groups, and the tone of their thought is at least partly determined by their relation in time to the Revolution.

Group I. Blake and Burns.

First came Blake and Burns. We have called them the heralds of the dawn. They did not need the historic Revolution to set their spirits free. They sympathized with it each in his way, but Blake was thirty-two, Burns thirty, when the Bastille fell in 1789. Both poets were clearly formed in the pre-revolutionary period.

Group II. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey.

There are three names in the next group: William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey. They were boys at the most sensitive age, from nineteen to fifteen years old, when the Bastille fell; in 1804, when Bonaparte became emperor, Wordsworth was thirty-four, Coleridge thirty-two, and Southey thirty. Thus they grew to manhood while the great drama went on. We can imagine the passion of delight with which all these young poets would respond to the young ideals of hope and freedom. We can easily understand, also, how terrible the later phases of the Revolution would be to them, and how they all, with Wordsworth, would suffer a shock of disillusion. It is not strange if we find them all reacting more or less in different ways from the uncritical enthusiasm of their youth, and developing in middle life a conservative bent which made them seem to certain ardent spirits of the younger generation "lost leaders" indeed. Yet we should be surprised if, despite all changes in political views and in the temper of thought, men of poetic feeling who had once known the rapture and uplift of those great moments ever walked wholly in the light of common day; and, indeed, to the last, the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge is visited, though with inconstant glance, by the spirit of an ideal faith.[1]

Group III. Byron, Shelley, Keats.

George Gordon Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats, form the last group of poets of this great period. They were literally children of the

[1] Perhaps we should include in this group Scott, who was almost an exact contemporary of Wordsworth, being one year younger; but Scott's fame as a prose writer has so eclipsed his fame as a poet, that it is better to reserve our study of him.

Revolution: Byron was born in 1788, just before it broke out, Shelley and Keats during its progress, the first in 1792, the second in 1795. To all these the earlier phases of the Revolution would be not even a personal memory, though they lay so close behind in the past of the race. The environment of these poets was that of the Europe of the Empire. How differently these young heirs of the historic revolution were affected by the conditions around them we shall see as we turn to closer study of the marvellous development of poetry in England between 1798 and 1830.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Dowden, Studies in Literature; The French Revolution and Literature. Royce, The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, traces in an interesting way the relations between German philosophy and the revolutionary movement. Stopford Brooke, Theology in the English Poets: note in particular a fine analysis of "The Prelude." Mrs. Oliphant, Literary History of England. Hancock, The French Revolution and the English Poets. "The Prelude," edited by A. J. George. Shelley's Prefaces to The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound show how the revolutionary movement appeared to a poet of the second generation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Book VI, Books IX–XI of "The Prelude," with selections from the later books, gives a class a vivid idea of the inner drama that accompanied the Revolution. Wordsworth's political sonnets and Coleridge's "Ode to France" may also be read.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

An historical lecture would here be much in place; also lectures on German, French, Italian literature, inspired by the Revolution.

CHAPTER III

FROM WORDSWORTH TO KEATS

THE poetry of the eighteenth century is at best a "twilight-piece." Collins's "Ode to Evening," or the fine apostrophe to Evening in the "Task" or the opening of Gray's "Elegy" seem to catch its spirit. The great poetry of the revolutionary period glows with the hues of a new day. Sunrise studies, like the exquisite opening of the second act of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" or the noble passage in the first book of the "Excursion," come to one's mind when one tries to describe it. It is a poetry of renewed youth, of expectancy, of marvel; the light that shines in it seems to discover a new earth and to promise a new heaven.

I. "Lyrical Ballads," Character and Significance

In 1798 a modest little volume appeared, called "Lyrical Ballads." Two young men were the authors, — William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The two had met after Wordsworth's return from France, and the friendship of Coleridge had been one of the powers that restored Wordsworth's troubled mind to sanity and peace. The devotion between the two poets was deep and vital; out of their happy intercourse sprang this

little book, born from a summer wandering over the Quantock hills.

The plan was that Wordsworth should write poems which should show the poetry in common things; Coleridge was to treat strange, supernatural subjects in such a way that they should appeal to the general heart. The poets kept their promise; realism and romance, the two great forces that were to re-create modern literature, are in full play in this small volume. Here are short poems of peasant life by Wordsworth, pure as dewdrops; they reveal the secrets of those little ones of the earth whom the world had long despised. Here is a ballad-poem by Coleridge, the "Ancient Mariner"; it takes us over perilous seas in fearsome company, thrilling us with images of horror and supernatural beauty, and we feel that the romantic impulse, dim though present in Gray and Collins, has conquered at last. Here, finally, Wordsworth's great poem, the "Lines written above Tintern Abbey," lifts the feeling for Nature, seen in Thomson and Cowper, into a higher realm, and throbs with the impassioned mystical recognition of a life in Nature kindred to our own.

The little book was greeted with derision, and Wordsworth wrote a preface for the second edition, a kind of manifesto of the new principles, which every one should read. He breaks formally in this preface with the eighteenth-century literary conventions about poetry, both as to style and as to subject. He demands that poetry use a selection of the actual language of men. When Cowper wants to describe a man smoking, he says "the sturdy churl" stops for nothing: —

"But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose." [1]

Wordsworth would have mentioned the pipe right out. Then Wordsworth pleads that poetry occupy itself no longer with the artificial life of society, with what separates man from man, but with the affections common to all, the primal, elemental experiences that bind the poor and the rich in the bond of a common humanity. This preface is a memorable thing in English critical prose.

II. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey

Wordsworth, 1770–1850.

Wordsworth spent his life and wrote his poems in loyalty to his faith. He loved the country, and he lived in one of the fairest regions of England, among the mountains and lakes of Westmoreland, which he has endeared forever to all who care for his poems.

Life.

His sister Dorothy lived with him, a woman of a beautiful soul. He married a cousin named Mary Hutchinson, and the tender depth of his feeling for her shows in many of his poems. During his early years he was very poor, but in later life he was appointed controller of stamps, and had money enough to live with frugal comfort. It was a life of deep retirement, of contemplation, and of peace; and out of it came a poetry which speaks to the heart with strange, penetrating purity.

[1] "The Task," Book V.

Subjects.

The central passion of the democratic thought which was entering the world shows itself in Wordsworth, not in excited dreams of a new social order, but in reverent interpretation of the lives of the laboring poor. Ladies fair and lovely knights had up to this time peopled the world of the imagination; great personages and clever personages and leaders of society and people to whom extraordinary things happened had moved there. Wordsworth introduced into this world, where life can never die, people of a different kind: an old shepherd grieving for his son, moving among the mists to his sheepfold; a highland girl reaping long rows of grain and singing to the movement of her sickle; a little cottage maid with tangled curls, who knew better than any philosopher that death is shadow, life the only truth. The leech-gatherer, the sailor, the beggar, the pedler, the wood-cutter, and many more simple folk meet us in Wordsworth's poetry. They are not people of elegant leisure, occupied with their pleasures or their passions; they work with their hands, helping in the fruitful labor of the world.

Humanity: especially the poor.

Nature.

Poet of humanity, Wordsworth was also the poet of Nature. The two were never separate in his thought. He tells us in the "Prelude" that the first men who pleased him were shepherds, seen from afar in the mountains, uplifted against the sunset sky; his characters always move in wide reaches of light under the open heavens. When he turns to Nature, she gains new glory in his eyes from her fellowship and kinship with man. Wordsworth did not simply admire Nature as the eighteenth century did. He loved her because she was alive with

a life full of joy and mystery. The time of heavy, cold, descriptive poetry is past; Wordsworth makes us know Nature, not by careful enumeration of parts, but by the emotion she kindles in his mind. The "Prelude" tells us the slow process by which the sensitive child grew to feel in all her ministries a revelation of the very life of God. There came to him —

> "A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things."[1]

Poetic quality.

Most of Wordsworth's best poetry was written between 1798 and 1806; it is made up chiefly of lyrics, sonnets, and of short narrative poems, but it includes also his noble autobiography in blank verse, the "Prelude." These poems are the result, to use his own fine phrase, of emotion recollected in tranquillity. A certain hush broods over them, and we realize, as we read, that out of great sorrow and searching of heart the poet's spirit has found peace. Sometimes his theory leads him astray, and he drops into prose; simplicity becomes flatness in lines like these: —

> "Who weeps for strangers? Many wept
> For George and Sarah Green;
> Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
> Whose grave may here be seen."[2]

[1] "Lines written above Tintern Abbey."
[2] "George and Sarah Green."

But the same poem rises into purest poetry a little later: —

"Now do these sternly featured hills,
Look gently on this grave,
And quiet now are the depths of air
As a sea without a wave.

"But deeper lies the heart of peace
In quiet more profound,
The very heart of quietness
Is in this churchyard bound.

"And from all agony of mind,
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star."

Coleridge's criticism on Wordsworth is the best and most penetrating that has ever been written, though many have written well of a poet who has in singular degree the power to draw to himself the hearts of men. The chief merits of Wordsworth's poetry are, says Coleridge, first, an austere purity of language; second, a weight and sanity of thought; third, the "*curiosa felicitas*" of diction, the sinewy strength and originality of single lines; fourth, the perfect truth to Nature in his images and descriptions; fifth, a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; and last, the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word.

Later work.

In Wordsworth's later life, though he still occasionally wrote a fine poem, his inspiration flagged. His long epic, "The Excursion," has strong passages, but it is weighted down with moralizing; in his

shorter poems, the "vision splendid" has faded into the "light of common day." His genius no longer "startles and waylays." He had become less happy; the conditions of national life did not satisfy him; he noted with intense regret the encroachments, already beginning, of the modern factory system on the lives of the rural poor. He took to preaching and pleading, and his natural magic of utterance failed. In 1843 he was made poet laureate; in 1850 he died.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772–1834.

We turn to the study of Wordsworth's brother in spirit, Coleridge. He was not a country boy, steeped in the profound love of Nature, as Wordsworth was, he was city-bred. He had been a classmate of the gentle essayist, Charles Lamb, at the Bluecoat School in London, and then had gone to Cambridge shortly after Wordsworth had quitted it. He did not know or love the real world so well as Wordsworth, but the passion for freedom and the quickening impulse of love for all things living which the new democracy brought with it entered the inner world of high romance in which his spirit dwelt. His career, however, was broken and clouded,

Life.

and the promise of his youth overcast. Unstable, despite his genius and warmth of nature, he fell under the dominion of the opium habit, and though the force of the habit was largely overcome during his later years, partly by his own efforts, partly by the ministries of devoted friends, it left him shattered, — a wreck, though a noble wreck, of what he might have been.

Work.

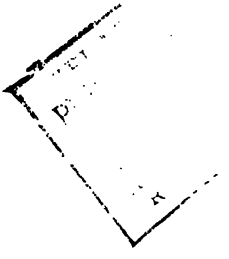
The poetry of Coleridge belongs to his youth; there is very little of it, but that little is of



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772-1834

After the painting by Washington Allston



purest gold. "The Ancient Mariner," of which we have already spoken, is his most important poem, and wonderful it is. It shows, in its use of the irregular old ballad form, as well as in other ways, that impulse to return to the past for inspiration which blends so curiously in the poetry of the first of the nineteenth century with the forces making toward the future. Its romanticism strikes the chord not only of surprise at outward marvel, but of wonder in the presence of spiritual mystery, dimly understood. "The Ancient Mariner."

"Christabel" is, next to "The Ancient Mariner," Coleridge's most important poem; but, like most of his best poetry, it is unfinished. It is a mediæval tale of unholy magic weaving its spells over innocence and faith. It has the high mystical beauty, the enchantment of style, of which only Coleridge is master. "The most decrepit vocable in the language," says Lowell, "throws away its crutches to dance and sing at his piping." "Christabel."

Coleridge produced also a translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein," and several dramas; but the body of his poetic writing is small. Nearly all the best of it is the result of the brief, happy time which he spent in intimate relations with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. When we find him in middle life rescued at last, after years of weakness, and restored to tranquillity, the poet has vanished and a philosopher has taken his place. This is not wholly loss. Coleridge was not only an inspired poet; he was a thinker of rare depth and power of spiritual insight. His prose works are fragmentary, for he was a broken man when he wrote most of them; but they are full of suggestion. His "Biographia Literaria" contains Other poetry. Prose, critical and philosophical.

the most pregnant literary criticism that England had then seen; it is largely occupied with a discussion of the poetry of Wordsworth, but it has also much valuable treatment of general critical principles. His "Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare" dealt a death-blow at the eighteenth-century custom of disparaging our greatest Englishman, and his "Aids to Reflection" well justifies its title. It was as a talker, however, that Coleridge, like Dr. Johnson before him, exerted his greatest power over the rising generation. He sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, near London, where friends had offered him a refuge, and poured forth the treasures of his mind for whosoever would hear. It was a mind nourished on the recent idealist philosophy of Germany, which had put a wholly new face on philosophic thought. Coleridge used philosophy of this order to feed his Christianity, for he was a profoundly Christian man; and he became a quickening force in the spiritual life of the rising generation. The deeper Christianity of the Victorian age, represented by such men as Cardinal Newman, and Frederick Denison Maurice, owes much to him.

Influence through conversation.

Yet, after all, it is as a poet that Coleridge is remembered best. His intellectual and spiritual power passed into the minds of other men, and was fertile there; his imagination gave us works which, if few, are immortal. They hold us spellbound, as the Ancient Mariner held the Wedding Guest, but with a lovelier spell: —

"A sealike sound the branches breathe,
Stirred by the breeze that loiters there,

And all that stretch their limbs beneath,
Forget the coil of mortal care;
Strange mists along the margin rise,
To heal the guests who thither come,
And fit the soul to reëndure
Its earthly martyrdom."

Not much need be said about Robert Southey, the third member of this older group of poets. He was poet, not by right divine as were the other two, but by virtue of the contagious fervor of the times. When a young man, he shared the democratic passion of Coleridge, and planned with him a socialist community called the Pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehanna; but an early marriage — he and Coleridge married sisters — turned his thoughts to the realities of life. He settled in the Lake country and became an industrious, exemplary man of letters. He poured forth various volumes of verse, — "Thalaba," "The Curse of Kehama," "Roderick," — concocted to meet the rising craving for romantic tales; he produced also some very good prose, the best of which is the "Life of Nelson." He was an excellent example of a conscientious literary man without genius, and England made him poet laureate. He held the office till his death, in 1843, when the laurel was placed on the worthier brows of Wordsworth.

Robert Southey, 1774–1843.

III. Byron, Shelley, Keats

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was the eldest of the younger group of revolutionary poets; his stormy life and work heave with the unrest that marked

George Gordon, Lord Byron, 1788–1824.

the subsiding passion of the Revolution. The spirit of revolt is in them, the assertion of the unlimited claim of the individual on the universe. They are full of pride and pain.

Life.

Byron belonged by birth to the English aristocracy. Haughty and passionate from his childhood, he was brought up by an erratic mother with a violent temper, from which he suffered many things. He was superbly handsome, despite a lameness that embittered his life. He won early fame by the publication of the first cantos of "Childe Harold," but the English public turned against him because of quarrels in his domestic affairs, and he resented their criticism intensely. He moved thereafter through a life, on the Continent, marred by recklessness and self-indulgence, to a noble death; for he died of a fever contracted in Greece, whither he had gone to help the Greeks in their war of independence.

Personality.

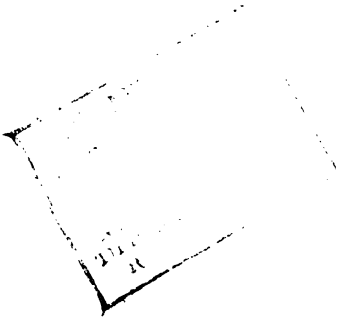
Byron's strong nature found nothing in the world so interesting as his own passions and sorrows; and because he was so interested in them, and because he had that strange force we call genius, all Europe was interested in them too. The world has come a little to doubt the value of a vociferous outpouring of rebellion and grievance such as Byron gave us in his large rhythmic harmonies: —

> "What boots it now that Byron bore
> With haughty pain that mocked the smart
> Through Europe to the Ætolian shore
> The pageant of his bleeding heart?
> That Europe counted every groan,
> And England made his pain her own?" [1]

[1] Stanzas from the "Grande Chartreuse."



GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON
[LORD BYRON]
1788-1824



queries Matthew Arnold. But for the time, the dark, romantic, self-willed figure seemed the controlling genius of the age, and Byron is still known throughout Europe better than any other English author except Shakespeare.

Work.

The work that insured Byron's popularity was a series of wild romances in verse: "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos," "The Corsair," "Lara," "Parisina." They had force and fire, and they told more or less stirring tales, but their sound and fury signify little to modern ears. "Childe Harold," begun in 1812, finished in 1818, is a greater work. The last cantos were written under the gentle and ennobling influence of Shelley, with whom Byron spent some time by the beautiful lake of Geneva. They give scope for splendidly phrased descriptions of Nature, and for eloquent and vivid descriptions of the monuments of the past. In these Byron showed that strong historic sense which was one of the best features of his intellectual equipment.

Romances in verse.

"Childe Harold," 1812, 1816, 1818.

"Manfred" and "Cain" are poems of still another character; in them Byron tried to handle wild supernatural motifs, something after the fashion of Goethe in "Faust," and, despite occasional passages of sombre beauty, he must be accounted to have failed. His lyrical power was crude and intermittent, and he was never really at home when he left the world of visible reality. It is in "Don Juan," Byron's masterpiece, that his genius found itself fully at last. The brilliant, mocking poem is wholly of the earth, earthy. Hero, story, setting, style, all perfectly reflect the cynical disillusion, the unredeemed worldliness, of the post-revolutionary period

"Manfred," 1817.

"Cain," 1821.

"Don Juan," 1819–1824.

in which Byron lived. Its easy movement passes with perfect facility from sensuous passion to bitter satire, and these two aspects represent the range of the poem. It is significant and interesting; for it shows how a man who, despite the romantic storm and stress of his youth, was at heart a realist, unvisited by any far-reaching vision of spiritual hope, looked out on the chaotic society and the shattered faiths that followed the Revolution.

Characteristics.

Byron wrote various other poems, including several dramas of mediocre value. "The moment he begins to reflect," said Goethe, who nevertheless admired him greatly, "he is a child." His imagination had little power to penetrate or to soar. His style was careless in the extreme, full of lapses from taste and melody; but it was also full of easy eloquence, and it gave a refreshing sense of power. We admire Byron's genius most in "Don Juan"; but we like best to remember him when, with firm touch and with his eye on the object, he describes some great thing, charged with historic associations, which he knew in the actual world, or when, as in the "Prisoner of Chillon," he gives a truly felt presentation of the fate of a martyr to liberty.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792–1822.

Byron's poetry is full of the forces of revolt and of self-assertion. But there were nobler forces at work in the Revolution, impulses not of personal desire, but of a great love, yearning toward justice and social peace. These impulses in their purity and intensity are expressed in the work of the greatest English lyric poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Shelley was the son of a stiff-necked English baronet. Like Byron, he belonged to the aristocracy, and grew up

Relation to the Revolution.

in the period of shattered faiths that followed the Revolution. But the conventions of class and rank were nothing to him, and through all the reactionary deadness of the times his spirit caught the light of the new democracy and shone with that light like the clear morning star. While still a schoolboy, there came to him, as he tells us in the "Ode to Intellectual Beauty," a vision of ideal loveliness. He followed that gleam through the world. He is the eternal seeker, and his voice has the melody of one who watches in hope.

Life and personality.

Shelley's passion for freedom controlled his life. It led him into touching, amusing attempts at reform in his early years. It shaped his practical destiny. He was expelled from his University, Oxford, because of a crude pamphlet he had written "On the Necessity of Atheism." He made a hasty and unhappy first marriage because of his desire to set a schoolgirl free from the "tyranny" of her school. Later, he set the laws of marriage at defiance, and lived in self-appointed exile in Italy, with Mary, who later became his second wife. She was the daughter of William Godwin, who had been the intellectual inspiration and guide of Shelley's youth. Shelley died while he was still young, only thirty years old, drowned in the beautiful bay of Spezia.

In Shelley's personal life there is much to regret; yet one cannot read the testimony of his contemporaries, Byron, Hogg, Trelawney, without being struck by the impression of ardent purity, gentleness, honor, which he made upon them. One and all hailed him as the rarest spirit they had ever known. Indeed, his whole being vibrated with love for

Nature, for the ideal principle of beauty, for freedom, and for his fellow-men. Unlike Sir Thomas More, who rather wished than hoped to see Utopia in England, Shelley had so strong a faith in human nature, in its intrinsic goodness and power, that he believed that the day would come when men would actually see and realize their ideal. He may have been right or wrong; but his renovating vision has thrilled many hearts from his day to our own. In common with most revolutionary thinkers of his time, he believed that worn-out governments and creeds must be discarded before the new society could be formed. So he was an iconoclast, as the phrase goes; that is, he believed in the overthrow of authority and law. But his best poetry chants not of battle nor of destruction, but of the Vision behind the veil and of a hope that cannot die.

Work.

As we follow Shelley's writings through the brief five years of his literary maturity, we can see how his genius ripens and gains in patience and in actuality. His first long poem was "Queen Mab," a boyish production, full of crude speculations. Next came, when he was twenty-four years old, "Alastor," and here Shelley found himself. The poem renders the experience of a lonely soul, that pursues through all the universe its haunting vision of beauty, soothed by the solemn ministries of Nature alone. In motif, "Alastor" recalls the "Faerie Queene."

"Queen Mab," 1813.

"Alastor," 1816.

Shelley's next important poem was the "Revolt of Islam." It is a romantic epic in Spenserian stanza, all about a great struggle for Freedom, led by a youth, Laon, and a maiden, Cythna, of surpassing beauty. There is a gloomy shadow of a Tyrant,

"Laon and Cythna: or, The Revolt of Islam," 1818.

there are wars and famines and images of horror, there are Southern seas and skies; in the end the lovers, martyrs, yet triumphant in defeat, join after death the sacred company in the Temple of the Spirit. It is all told in verse of ardent, daring melody; one feels the soul of Shelley and of youth itself in the poem; but it is too far from reality to be great.

"Prometheus Unbound," 1819.

This is not true of the next long poem, written in 1819. The "Prometheus Unbound" is the supreme expression of Shelley's genius and of revolutionary faith. It may seem strange to attribute a sense of reality to this lyrical drama, for the poem deals with no possible earthly story, but with a great primeval myth. But the myth is real to Shelley. He takes the old story from Æschylus, about Prometheus the Titan, who stole fire from heaven to benefit the race of men, and who was therefore doomed by Jupiter to hang in torture for endless ages on the precipices of Mt. Caucasus. In Shelley's mind, the Rebel has become the Hero, who endures in awful patience, the representative of a humanity tortured, yet purified through its pains. The "Prometheus Unbound," in its mysticism, will always remain to many a sealed book; but even those who care nothing for the intellectual conception can delight in the lyric beauty, and in an imagery and an interpretation of Nature unrivalled in English verse.

"The Cenci," 1819.

Even while Shelley was producing the "Prometheus," he turned aside from this drama of the upper air to write swiftly and fervently a drama of solid earth. "The Cenci" is firm as sculpture in its outlines; it has more dramatic power and terror than any tragedy since the seventeenth century. It shows us a wholly new side of Shelley's genius.

"Epipsychidion," 1821.
"Adonais," 1821.
"Hellas," 1822.
"The Triumph of Life" (unfinished).

This list of Shelley's longest poems by no means exhausts, it only suggests, his creative energy. Others, less long, hardly less great, crowd on the memory: "Hellas," "Epipsychidion," "Adonais." The "Adonais," Shelley's elegy on his brother poet, Keats, ranks with the great elegies of the English tongue, with "Lycidas" and "In Memoriam." It has not the Christian note of clear faith as these others have; Shelley's intuition of spiritual things was vague and pantheistic, and the inner truth of Christianity he was always unable to discern through the traditions of his day. But spiritual insight of its own order the "Adonais" surely possesses. No other elegy so palpitates with the sense of the mystery of life, and its unity in man and Nature through the whole creation.

Lyrics.

But Shelley is greatest of all perhaps in his minor lyrics. They soar like his own skylark in the free heaven of idealism. Some of them are as elaborate in structure as the odes of the eighteenth century, but they give quite a different impression of movement and freedom. Others penetrate the soul with a poignant simplicity of phrasing. They sing of the changing phases of the life of Nature, of the beauty that dies as it is born, of the darkness that forever blends with the dawning light; in like manner, they sing of the swiftly changing passions of the soul of the poet, and through all change they seek, but never find, the beauty that shall endure.

In all Shelley's work glows such an intuition of spiritual loveliness, so intense a faith in a nobler future for this old world, that we must hail him, not only as poet, but as prophet. He died in youth, nor can any

one guess what he might have achieved had he lived to fuller manhood. As it is, he seems like the very embodiment of the new youth of the world. A few lines of his own give the secret of his power: —

"Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image, so intensely fair,
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel tremble and wear
The splendor of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame."

John Keats, 1795–1821.

John Keats, the last of this group of poets, and the youngest, was not, like Byron and Shelley, of noble birth; his father had been in youth a hostler, and later owned a stable in London. The boy went to a good school, and was apprenticed to a surgeon. Till his love of letters brought him into literary society, his connections were unpoetic. He lived in London, which was, however, more accessible to the country then than now, until, with a wasting disease upon him, he went to Italy, there to die when he was only twenty-four years old.

Life and personality.

It does not seem to matter much where poets are born, or how they are brought up. This poor boy, who had so little of beauty or wonder in the outward condition of his life, really lived in a world which any one of us might envy. "The other day," he said to a friend when at the medical school, "during the lecture there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairy-land." From fairy-land, one is tempted to say, he never returned.

Poet of the artistic revolt.

Keats took refuge from a sordid present in a world of dreams. He cared nothing for political or social freedom; his poetry shows no trace of the passion of brotherhood, almost no trace of human feeling. Only through his art do we recognize in him a child of the Revolution. His early poem, "Sleep and Poetry," marks the entire breaking away from the traditions of the eighteenth century. Keats took the rhymed couplet, which had been so stiff and smart in the hands of Pope, ran over the ends of lines at his will, let it fall as it would into irregular melodic units, gave it freedom, variety, sweetness. No matter what form he chose as his work went on, blank verse or lyric ode, his grace and richness of utterance were constant. He set poetry free from measured rule, and let it beat close to the rhythmic heart of life.

Work.

"Endymion," 1819.

"Hyperion," 1819.

In subject, also, Keats showed how the romantic temper had conquered at last. He revelled in all marvel and in all beauty. In his "Endymion" and in the noble fragment, "Hyperion," his mind sped back to that ancient world of myth where fair and divine forms meet an innocent humanity only less fair, in the green dusk of the woodlands or the caverns below the sea; or he seeks the abode where mighty Titans bemoan with the large utterance of the early gods their vanished glory, recognizing to their sorrow that the day is to those younger deities who, first in beauty, must therefore be first also in might. "Lamia," also, and the exquisite short "Ode to a Grecian Urn," breathe the classic inspiration. Again, as in "The Eve of St. Agnes," the unfinished "Eve of St. Mark," and the ballad, "La Belle Dame

"Lamia," 1819.

sans Merci," Keats turns to the middle ages for inspiration, as Coleridge did in "Christabel," and finds there a beauty less charged with mysticism than did Coleridge, but aglow with color and feeling. The same romantic temper controls his shorter poems, especially the handful of immortal odes, — "To a Nightingale," "To Psyche," "To Autumn," "To Melancholy," "On a Grecian Urn." By these alone, even had he left nothing else, we should know that a great poet had been with us.

The odes, 1819.

> "Beauty is truth, truth beauty; this is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know:"

so Keats formulated his creed; and he said the same thing in prose, when he wrote: "What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth — whether it existed before or not." "I have loved the principle of beauty in all things," he said in his last days. It is as high priest of beauty that he is immortal. We can notice with more delight the return of the sense of beauty to our literature in his work than in that of his contemporaries, because there is less to distract us from it.

Distinctive power.

Sometimes the beauty which he reveals to us is sensuous, sometimes imaginative. Keats's senses were perhaps more delicate and intense than those of any other among our poets. Color was an ecstasy to him, and he makes it an ecstasy to us. He was more sensitive than even his master, Spenser, to the appeal of sound, from the "solemn tenor and deep organ tone" of the speech of the Titan woman to —

The appeal to the eye.

> "A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
> Born of the very sense that silence heaves."

To the ear.

To the imagination.

Fragrance and even taste are noted again and again in his verse. Yet his poetry, though responsive from first to last to the charm of the senses, recognizes constantly a nobler appeal. This is the appeal of the imaginative past. It is the sense that we are made free of the whole realm of the beautiful, opened by the human race from the beginning of time, that gives breadth and power to a poetry into which the air of the actual world is seldom indeed allowed to enter.

Keats's promise.

There are indications in Keats's poetry and also in his letters that had he lived he hoped to emerge from his dreams and to throw the light of his imagination upon the world of men. But this was not vouchsafed him. The year 1819 was the *annus mirabilis* of his genius. In this year he produced "The Eve of St. Agnes," "Hyperion," and his great odes. It was the year of the "Prometheus Unbound," a notable year indeed in the annals of English poetry! The next year he sickened, and in 1821 he died. Matthew Arnold says, quoting from one of his letters: "No one else in English poetry save Shakespeare has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness. 'I think,' he said humbly, 'I shall be among the English poets after my death.' . . . He is; he is with Shakespeare."

IV. General Characteristics

We have passed the great poets of the first of the century in rapid review. Widely different though they are, their achievement, when we look at it broadly, yet shows a certain unity. It has been said

to express the renascence of wonder. And indeed the sense of wonder rests on all of it, whether evidenced in the crude excitements in which Byron revelled, in the contemplative awe of Wordsworth, in the darting spiritual intuition of Shelley, or in the quest for remote delights of Coleridge and Keats. But the renascence of beauty is as strong as the renascence of wonder; beauty, which had fled the eighteenth century, abides forever here, whether she "dwells in deep retreats" as in Wordsworth, or flashes glory on us wherever we may gaze, as in the work of Keats and Shelley. Again, and here we meet what is rather a new birth than a rebirth, the exultant impulse of freedom and brotherhood is almost without exception the informing spirit of this modern song. Sometimes this spirit shows itself in tender brooding over the lives of the individual poor, sometimes in enraptured distant vision of a regenerate world; but always it comes from the quickened sense of the sacredness of humanity. And with this new feeling comes an awakened sense of loving kinship with the great visible world which is, at least while he is on pilgrimage, the home of man. Nothing like the passionate love of Nature shown by these poets had been seen in our English literature since the days of Cynewulf; nothing like it has been seen since. The delighted interpretation of her language, the joy in her beauty, the sympathy with her life, enriched our race with a neglected heritage, and the Return to Nature is a great watchword which is not yet exhausted.

The renascence of wonder.

Of beauty.

The new birth of democracy.

The love of Nature.

The quest for wonder, for beauty, for freedom and brotherhood, for fellowship with Nature, play

into one another till cause cannot be distinguished from effect in all this poetry. But the great words which remain in our mind as we turn away are two: Romance and Democracy. Romance and democracy! Many will say that as the century has advanced they keep pace with each other no longer; and indeed democracy seems unromantic enough in some of its aspects to-day. But it is well, perhaps, for us to remember that the two blended and enhanced each the other in the great burst of song that accompanied the advent of the modern world.

Summary. Romance and democracy.

REFERENCE BOOKS

General. SAINTSBURY, History of Nineteenth Century Literature. Mrs. OLIPHANT, Literary History of the Nineteenth Century. DOWDEN, Studies in Literature; Transcripts and Studies. HERFORD, The Age of Wordsworth. MATTHEW ARNOLD, Essays in Criticism. SHAIRP, The Poetic Interpretation of Nature; Aspects of Poetry. BAGEHOT, Literary Studies. LOWELL, Among my Books.

Wordsworth. Globe edition, Introduction by JOHN MORLEY. Selections, ed. by MATTHEW ARNOLD. Life, by MYERS (English Men of Letters). KNIGHT (3 vols). Essays, by ARNOLD, HUTTON, BAGEHOT, AUBREY DE VERE, PATER, LOWELL (3 essays), LESLIE STEPHEN. KNIGHT, Through the Wordsworth Country.

Coleridge. Globe edition, Life, by CAMPBELL. Life, TRAILL (English Men of Letters), CAINE (Great Writers Series). Essays, PATER, SWINBURNE, ARNOLD, LOWELL. Selections from prose writings, H. A. BEERS. BRANDL, S. T. Coleridge and the English Romantic School.

Byron. Cambridge Byron, ed. by PAUL ELMER MORE. Life, NICHOL (English Men of Letters), NOEL (Great Writers Series). Essays, JOHN MORLEY, MACAULAY, SWINBURNE ("Wordsworth and Byron"), ARNOLD, TRELAWNEY.

Shelley. Centenary edition, WOODBERRY (6 vols.). Selections, STOPFORD BROOKE (Golden Treasury Series). Life, EDWARD DOWDEN (2 vols.), SYMONDS (English Men of Letters), GARNETT (Great Writers Series), WILLIAM ROSSETTI. Essays,

by BAGEHOT, HUTTON, ARNOLD, DOWDEN. SCUDDER, Introduction to the "Prometheus Unbound." Publications of the Shelley Society.

Keats. Cambridge Keats, ed. by H. E. SCUDDER. Life, by COLVIN (English Men of Letters), ROSSETTI (Great Writers Series). Essays, LOWELL, ARNOLD.

See, also, articles on all these men in Dictionary of National Biography.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

This chapter offers material for a year's study. Hints of minimum reading may be given. From Wordsworth, Arnold's "Selections"; from Coleridge, "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel"; from Shelley, the "Adonais" and the Lyrics published with "Prometheus Unbound." From Byron, "The Prisoner of Chillon," and selections from "Childe Harold"; from KEATS, "The Eve of St. Agnes," the great odes.

Wordsworth. Take Coleridge's analysis, and let the class find illustrations of every point he makes, favorable and unfavorable. Let the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," the "Ode to Duty," and some of the sonnets, be learned by heart, and thoroughly discussed. Subjects for study: Wordsworth's Treatment of Humanity. What kind of people? where placed? what happens to them? Wordsworth's Treatment of Nature. Compare with Cowper. Wordsworth's Poetic Theory and Practice. Wordsworth's Spiritual Attitude. Special topics: Wordsworth's Sonnets compared with Milton's, Bird-life in Wordsworth, Wordsworth's Children.

Coleridge. "The Ancient Mariner" should be read with consecutive analysis. Watch the pictures, follow and interpret a little the symbolism, be sensitive to the verse movement. Special topics: Compare "The Ancient Mariner" with old ballads of shipwreck and the supernatural; Coleridge's Feeling for Nature compared with Wordsworth's.

Shelley. Reconstruct Shelley's personality from his lyrics. Treatment of Nature compared with Wordsworth — favorite type of landscape, method of interpretation. The meaning of freedom to Shelley. Why could not Shelley draw a character as Shakespeare could? Analyze the metrical structure of the "Ode to the West Wind," the "Ode to Liberty," the choruses to "Hellas." Special topics: The "Adonais" compared with "Lycidas," The Debt of the "Adonais" to the Greek

Elegies, Shelley as a Colorist, Shelley's Defence of Poetry compared with Sir Philip Sidney's.

Byron. Illustrate with photographs, if possible, Byron's descriptions of statues, architecture, scenery, as, for instance, the "Dying Gladiator," the "Niobe," the "Lake of Geneva." Compare the sources of discontent in Byron, Wordsworth, and Shelley. Compare their enthusiasms. In what points does Byron surpass Shelley? Special topic: Byron's Handling of the Spenserian Stanza in "Childe Harold" studied in Comparison with Shelley's in "Adonais," Keats's in "Eve of St. Agnes."

Keats. Compare the romanticism of Keats with that of Scott, of Coleridge, of Byron. Illustrate from Keats's poems the sensitiveness of his eye, of his ear, of his touch, of his taste, of his smell. Describe some of the pictures from the world in which his imagination moved. Special topics: Compare style and substance in Keats's "Sleep and Poetry" and Pope's "Essay on Criticism"; compare the treatment of Greek mythology in Keats and Shelley.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The work of the class should be detailed, devoted chiefly to close study of a few poems, and to the enjoyment of one poet after another. A few talks from the teacher on more general lines could make more vivid the whole character of the period: Social Ideals in Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley; The Relation of Nature to Humanity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats; The Spiritual Outlook of the Revolutionary Poets.

CHAPTER IV

PROSE TILL 1830

I. Fiction

THE spirit of prose, which had so fully controlled the literature of the eighteenth century even when that literature happened to be written in verse, slipped once more into the background during the thirty years after the revolutionary movement. Delightful and important prose was written at this time; but as a whole the prose had neither the scope nor the significance of the poetry.

The prose of the period is, as we should expect, touched with the instinct of romance, and its greatest name is that of a novelist, — Sir Walter Scott. Scott, like Coleridge, wrote in both verse and prose; but we put Coleridge into the last chapter because he was poet in the depths of him, and we put Scott here because, while his tales in verse are full of fire and facile grace, the entire breadth and force of his nature found no outlet till he turned to prose.

Sir Walter Scott, 1771–1832.

Scott was an almost exact contemporary of Wordsworth; but he was not bound to the little group of the older revolutionary poets by any personal ties. He was a Scotchman, and his first and last passion was for the romantic history and legend of his native land. We know as we read him that many of his instincts were Celtic, though the sturdy Saxon sense

for facts controls his ardent romantic impulses. The combination is a good one, for a writer of fiction; the nineteenth century was to see it again in later years in Robert Louis Stevenson.

Scott's poetry.

Scott gained popularity more easily than his greater contemporaries of the South. His first original work took the public by storm. This was a series of spirited romances in verse, — "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," "Marmion," "The Lady of the Lake," and others not so good as these. To this day there are no stories better told in English verse than Scott's. But his poetry had no profound imaginative quality like that of his contemporaries. He could dream dreams, but he could not see visions. Nor had he magic of utterance, though he had sincerity and fire. He used the rapidly moving couplet of four beats, which is the basal measure of "Christabel"; but if we put the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" beside "Christabel," we feel instantly how Coleridge is beyond calculation the master in imparting those undertones and overtones, those subtle variations in pause and accent, that give enchantment to the music of verse.

The poetry of Scott was just the kind to have great vogue for a time and then to fall into neglect. Byron began to pour forth his early romances, — far more fervid and surprising than those of Scott, though less healthy and to-day less interesting; fickle readers turned to the new voice, and it seemed as if Scott's day were over.

Scott's novels.

Then, in 1814, appeared an anonymous novel called "Waverley." It was full of adventure, humor, and charm. We must remember that there were very few good novels in those days; the art of fiction



SIR WALTER SCOTT
1771-1832
After the painting by Raeburn



had fallen from the strong hands of Richardson and Fielding into the grasp of inferior people. The mystery of the authorship of the book enhanced its popularity. Soon others, no less delightful, followed in quick succession: "Guy Mannering," "The Antiquary," "Old Mortality," "Rob Roy," "The Heart of Midlothian," "The Bride of Lammermoor," "Ivanhoe," "The Abbot," "Kenilworth," "Quentin Durward," "Redgauntlet," — twenty-nine all told. It was not long before the secret leaked out; the author of these novels was Sir Walter Scott. He had come to his true power at last.

The Waverley novels and Scott's second series, the "Tales of My Landlord," form one of the treasures of English literature. Seventeen of them are historic; and they are on the whole the most important expression we have of that enthusiasm for the past, especially for the middle ages, which has stirred so strongly in the quickened modern imagination. Scott's scholarship is not always so accurate as that of later times, but he made an honest effort to project himself into the periods of which he treats, and he had the great help of an eye that could see the past clearly. He really created historical romance in England as a worthy art form. The great novel of the eighteenth century had derived its power from its realism. It had been followed by a feeble romantic school in fiction, that turned too far away from reality to live. Now came Scott, and he took this weak romantic impulse, and thrilled it into life. His romances have helped us all, more perhaps than we realize, to make our inward pictures of the times of which they treat.

His revival of history.

His realism.

But if Scott is a great master of historical fiction, it is because he has an intense feeling for reality. And after all, his truest and deepest power is not in his famous portraits, like those of Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots and Richard Cœur de Lion, fine though these are, but in his keen understanding of the homely Scotch people whom he met all around him. Characters like Jeanie Deans and Dandie Dinmont are his greatest triumphs. It is in his sympathetic and humorous rendering of the life of these simple folk that Scott, half unconsciously to himself, draws power from the democratic feeling of his age; it is here that his work touches Wordsworth's, and here, and here only, do his method and his genius suggest Shakespeare.

Scott's later years.

The end of Scott's life was mournful. He had made large sums of money by his books, and he had built for himself at Abbotsford a Gothic mansion, which visitors still flock to see. In 1825 the failure of a business firm for which he held himself responsible threw him into heavy debt. He was a man of high spirit and splendid honor; he set himself to remove that mountain of debt by the labor of his pen. He undertook, not only novels, but hackwork of various descriptions; he wrote furiously, copiously, —and, at last, badly. Even his valiant and fertile powers failed before the Herculean task was achieved. His last novels show traces of mental wreck, and Scott died at the age of sixty-one, worn out in mind as in body. It is an heroic, pitiful tale.

Jane Austen, 1775–1817.

Sooner or later excellence wins its way. Half a dozen modest and unobtrusive novels, the first of which had to wait fifteen years for a publisher, have

quietly slipped into a place beside the work of Scott and of the other great revealers of life through fiction. They were written by Jane Austen, the daughter of a country clergyman. Compared with the novels of Scott, they seem like dainty miniatures on porcelain beside large historical paintings.

Jane Austen was a witty and pretty woman, and she wrote her books on the sly, in the intervals of the usual women's work of the day, seemingly occupied by the claims of family and society. Her stories describe exactly the life she knew, that of placid villages and country houses, where leisure and decorous manners prevailed, where the range of interests was still that of the eighteenth century, and nothing ever happened more exciting than a clandestine engagement. Perhaps Miss Austen never realized that she was reviving the tradition of close realism in the English novel, and doing this with a delicacy and minuteness of observation before unknown. But this is what is really accomplished by her six stories, "Pride and Prejudice," "Sense and Sensibility," "Northanger Abbey," "Mansfield Park," "Emma," and "Persuasion." We feel in these books the expression of the special sort of fine pleasure felt by a clever and cheerful woman in the everyday drama of social life. They show, as the "Vicar of Wakefield" showed, but as the eighteenth-century fiction in general did not show, what delightful humor, untinged by coarseness, is afforded by the gentle, commonplace play of character on character. Jane Austen is not the first woman novelist in England; women from the first took to novel-writing more readily than they had taken to any other literary work; Miss Burney, and

"Sense and Sensibility," 1811.

"Pride and Prejudice," 1812.

"Mansfield Park," 1814.

"Emma," 1816.

"Northanger Abbey," 1818.

"Persuasion," 1818.

in a way Mrs. Radcliffe, were already respected names. But she was the first to take a leading place. Her province was the novel of manners; some of her successors, like Charlotte Brontë in England, and George Sand in France, were to excel in the novel of passion; others, like George Eliot, in what we may call the novel of conscience. No great novel of action has ever yet been written by a woman.

II. Essay

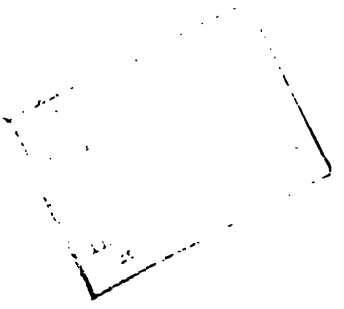
The great critical reviews.

Apart from the novel there was at this time a significant development of critical prose. More important perhaps than the work of any one author was the establishment of several great critical reviews; for from these have proceeded the magazines of our own day, which have so large a share in shaping the intellectual life of the public. First of these was the *Edinburgh Review*, founded in 1802 by Sydney Smith, Francis Jeffrey, and other clever young men, as an organ of the Liberals. The *Edinburgh* has the proud distinction of having introduced Macaulay and Carlyle to the public. In 1809, the *Quarterly* was established as the organ of the Tories, and in 1817, *Blackwood's*, in which appeared the charming work of Wilson (Christopher North). In 1824, was started the *Westminster*.

Criticism gained a chance to expand and experiment in these organs. At first it was autocratic in tone, and it made some memorable blunders, as when Jeffrey denounced Wordsworth, or the *Quarterly*



CHARLES LAMB
1775-1834



sneered at Keats. But slowly critics learned that our minds live more truly by admiration than by contempt, and that good criticism must always spring from sympathy before it can venture on judgment. We may follow in these reviews and their successors all the phases through which the great art of criticism passes between Johnson and Arnold.

Among the individual essayists of this period, the dearest to us is assuredly Charles Lamb. There is no more lovable figure in all our long story than this gentle friend of Coleridge. We love the man for his quaint and sweet essays, and these essays gain new charm for us when we know his brave, pathetic life. Lamb was a schoolmate of Coleridge at the famous Bluecoat School. A tragedy threw its shadow over him when he was young; his sister Mary, a spirit hardly less rare than his own, killed her mother in a fit of insanity. Charles devoted his life to this sister, whose days were clouded by recurrent attacks of the malady. They were never rich. Lamb, for thirty-one years a clerk in India House, passed his days in bondage and controlled only his evenings. Still, this brother and sister were not unhappy. They both had active minds and keen powers of enjoyment, they were endeared to a large circle of friends, and they had the deep comfort of serene, unassuming, religious faith. Lamb found his delights, perforce, not, like the great poets his comrades, in nature or in travel, but in the world of books and men. These delights he has recorded for us in a fascinating way in his "Essays of Elia," and in the fine introductions to his "Selections from the Drama-

Charles Lamb, 1775–1834.

Life.

Work.

"Rosamund Gray," 1789.

tists." Lamb was steeped in the Elizabethan drama, and in the essayists of the seventeenth century, and his writings are a joy to the cultivated ear, partly because, with all their individuality, they are vocal with echoes of past delights. The pleasurableness of the literature of our latter days is largely due, often, to its power of quickening associations, as the fresh singing of a young girl sometimes makes her hearers start by recalling the tones of her mother.

"John Woodvil," 1801.
"Mr. H.," 1807.
"Tales from Shakespeare," 1807.
"Specimens from the Dramatic Poets," 1808.
"Essays of Elia," 1822, 1824, 1833.

Lamb wrote, besides his essays, a little tale, "Rosamund Gray," and two dramas, a comedy, "Mr. H.," and a tragedy, "John Woodvil." With his sister, he wrote the "Tales from Shakespeare," which have become a classic in their way. He died in 1834, surviving by only a few months Coleridge, whose friendship had formed the romance of his life.

William Hazlitt, 1778–1830.

William Hazlitt was a vigorous critic of the day. We remember him best because, with Lamb and Coleridge, he helped to revive intelligent enthusiasm for Shakespeare.

Leigh Hunt, 1784–1859.

Leigh Hunt, friend of Shelley and Keats, and editor of a literary periodical, the *Examiner*, was a pleasant essayist of good literary tastes, though a little too much inclined to sweets. But we pass rapidly on to two more important names: Thomas De Quincey and Walter Savage Landor. In Landor and De Quincey we find again the constantly recurrent expression of the two forces that are always striving for control in literature and art: classicism and romanticism.

Thomas De Quincey, 1785–1859.

Thomas De Quincey was born in 1785. He was a precocious and dreamy boy, master of Greek at fifteen, an enthusiast in the accumulation of all kinds of knowledge. At his University, Oxford, he spent

several years of recluse life. He had a romantic devotion for Wordsworth, and settled for a time in the Lake country, to be near his idol. He spent his later life in or near Edinburgh. Unfortunately, for himself, but fortunately, perhaps, for English literature, he fell under the influence of the opium habit, and his most remarkable work, "The Confessions of an Opium-Eater," is a kind of autobiography telling the extraordinary experiences of his disease. His writings were all in the form of contributions to periodicals; some of them are called "Suspiria de Profundis," "Murder as One of the Fine Arts," "The Flight of a Tartar Tribe."

As might be inferred from these titles, De Quincey's work shows the strength and the weakness of romanticism carried to an extreme. The thrill of the unusual is the chief impression that it gives. It recalls the work of our American Poe. He loved to impart to prose harmonious cadences hitherto undreamed of, and to fill the mind with strange images of beauty, mystery, or terror. A series of majestic visions passes before the inner sight as we read the record of his opium dreams. But although the power of De Quincey's prose is unquestioned, it is a bad model. His style is frequently extravagant and overwrought, his very stateliness is so self-conscious that it wearies, and he too often confuses the imaginative with the fantastic.

Walter Savage Landor, 1775–1864.

The style of Walter Savage Landor, on the other hand, was one of chiselled purity. Landor was a Greek born out of his due time. His very passion for liberty was of the classic rather than of the revolutionary stamp. Few modern men care much about

Poems, 1795.
"Gebir," 1798.
"Count Julian," 1812.
"Imaginary Conversations," 1824–1853.
"Pericles and Aspasia," 1836.
"Pentameron," 1837.
"Last Fruit off an old Tree." 1853.

a belated Greek, and Landor will never be popular. But he has had a strong and abiding influence on other literary artists; and to certain readers, his "Imaginary Conversations," his "Pericles and Aspasia," will always offer a place wherein to take refuge with eternal beauty and calm wisdom. Landor showed as strong an historical sense as Scott, but in a different way. In his "Imaginary Conversations" he would sketch a dramatic setting briefly, sometimes exquisitely, and then he would set the people of the past to talking about things that interested him, and that might have interested them. There is a cool, high intellectual power about these dialogues; there is at times a rare felicity of style, alluring from its very reserve.

Landor wrote verse also; a blank verse poem, "Gebir," a drama, "Count Julian," and certain lyrics. His verse is lofty, pure, reserved, like his prose. Rarely competent to move, it has yet at times a pathos enhanced by its dignity. We may sum up Landor's life as he saw it, in his own words: —

> "I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved, and next to nature, art.
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

He lived fourteen years after he wrote these noble lines, and died, eighty-nine years old, in Florence. It is curious to know that the author of books so severe and serene was a very choleric man. Legends of his peculiarities of temper and disposition still linger. His life is interesting, not only for itself, but for his many literary connections; he is a link be-

tween the generation of Southey, who was the friend of his youth, and the generation of Browning, who tended the lionlike old man with the devotion of a son in his lonely and troubled old age.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Life of Scott, by LOCKHART; by HUTTON. Essay on Scott, LESLIE STEPHEN. SCOTT'S Journal. RUSKIN, in Fors Clavigera, has charming fragments of a biography of Scott. Life of Jane Austen, GOLDWIN SMITH (Great Writers Series). Life of Lamb, AINGER (English Men of Letters). PAGE, Life and Writings of De Quincey. Essay on De Quincey, LESLIE STEPHEN. Landor, Selections, by SIDNEY COLVIN, with excellent introduction (Golden Treasury Series). Selections, Athenæum Press Series. Life, Sidney Colvin.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Scott's poems, especially "Marmion" and the "Lady of the Lake," form admirable preparation for the greater romantic work of his contemporaries. Study of the novel as an art form may be begun with Scott better than with any other novelist, for his art is at once sound and obvious, a rare combination. Plot development, character presentation, dramatic contrast, etc., can be missed in his work by no one who looks for them. Jane Austen may well be studied immediately after Scott, to point a contrast.

It is a pity to analyze Charles Lamb. The influence of seventeenth-century prose upon the style should, however, be carefully noted. Landor and De Quincey may well be read together, in short extracts, for the sake of contrast. Reading of a few selected early reviews is profitable as a warning against critical blunders, and a point of departure from which the evolution of modern criticism can be traced.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

The Personality of Scott; of Charles Lamb; Early Modern Criticism, its Strength and its Weakness; the Classical and the Romantic in Prose Style; The Art of Jane Austen.

ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
William Blake, (poet, mystic, artist). 1757–1827.	Schiller: "Dreissigjährige Krieg," 1791.	Birmingham Riots, 1791.	Flight of Louis XVI from Paris, 1791.
Robert Burns, (poet). 1759–1796.	Goethe: "Reinecke Fuchs," 1794.	Battle of the Nile, 1798.	September Massacres in Paris, 1792.
Thomas Paine, (social reformer). 1737–1809.	"Wilhelm Meister," 1795.	Bank of England built.	Reign of Terror in France, 1793.
William Godwin, (social reformer). 1756–1836.	Schiller: "Wallenstein," 1798.	Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1800.	Fall of the Girondists, 1793.
William Paley, (theologian). 1745–1805.	Goethe: "Hermann und Dorothea," 1798.	Penalties imposed on combinations to raise wages, 1800.	Fall of Robespierre, 1794.
Ann Radcliffe, (novelist). 1764–1823.	Schiller: "Maria Stuart," 1800.		The Directorate, 1795.
Jeremy Bentham, (economist). 1748–1832.	Hegel, 1770–1831.		Napoleon, 1769–1821.
Robert Southey, (poet). 1774–1843.	Chateaubriand: "Atalanta," 1801.	First Factory Act, 1802.	The Consulate, 1799–1804.
Lyrical Ballads, 1798.	Schiller: "Wilhelm Tell," 1804.	War with France, 1803.	Canova (sc), 1757–1822.
William Wordsworth, (poet). 1770–1850.	Schelling, 1775–1854.	Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.	J. L. David (p), 1748–1825
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (poet, critic, philosopher). 1772–1834.	Death of Schiller, 1805.	Nelson, 1758–1805.	Beethoven (m), 1770–1827.
Charles Lamb, (essayist, critic, dramatist, novelist). 1775–1834.	Madame De Staël: "Corinne," 1806.	Abolition of Slave Trade, 1807.	
Walter Savage Landor, (poet, author of "Imaginary Conversations"). 1775–1864.	Uhland, 1787–1862.	Peninsular War begins, 1808.	
	Goethe: "Faust," Pt. I, 1808.		
	Lamartine, 1792–1869.		

Thomas Robert Malthus, (economist) 1766–1834.
Hannah More, (essayist). 1745–1833.
Joanna Baillie, (writer of verse). 1762–1851.
Maria Edgeworth, (novelist, writer of moral tales). 1767–1849.

Edinburgh Review estab. 1802.
Sir Walter Scott, (novelist, poet). 1771–1832.
Jane Porter, (novelist). 1776–1850.
Thomas Moore, (poet). 1779–1852.
George Gordon, Lord Byron, (poet). 1788–1824.

Quarterly Review estab. 1808.
Jane Austen, (novelist). 1775–1817.
Percy Bysshe Shelley, (poet). 1792–1822.
Mary Shelley, (romance writer). 1797–1851.

Blackwood's Magazine estab. 1817.
William Hazlitt, (essayist, critic). 1778–1830.
John Keats, (poet). 1795–1821.
David Ricardo, (economist). 1772–1823.

The Brothers Grimm:
"Kinder- und Haus-Märchen," 1812.
Guizot, 1787–1874.
Schopenhauer:
"Die Welt als Wiele und Vorstellung," 1819.
Heine:
"Gedichte," 1822.
Leopardi:
"Bruta Minore," 1824.
Heine:
"Reisebilder," 1826–1831.
"Buch der Lieder," 1827.
Victor Hugo:
"Odes et Ballades," 1829.
Goethe:
"Wilhelm Meister," completed, 1829.
Victor Hugo:
"Hernani," 1830.

King becomes permanently mad, 1810.
Regency Bill, 1811.
War with the United States, 1812.
Battle of Salamanca, 1812.
Wellington, 1769–1852.
Battle of Waterloo, 1815.
Agricultural and Weaving Riots, 1816–1818.
Manchester Reform Meeting, 1819.
George IV, 1820–1830.
Trial of Queen Caroline, 1820.
Mrs. Siddons, actress, 1755–1831.
First Mechanics' Institute, 1823.
First Railway, 1824.
British Academy of Music, 1824.

First French Empire, 1804–1815.
Battle of Jena, 1806.
University of Berlin, 1810.
Burning of Moscow, 1812.
Congress of Vienna, 1814.

The Holy Alliance, 1815.
Weber (m), 1786–1826.
Schubert (m), 1797–1828.
Humboldt, 1769–1859.
Thorwaldsen (sc), 1770–1844.
Talleyrand, politician, 1754–1838.

ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
William Blake, 1757–1827. (poet, mystic, artist).	Schiller: "Dreissigjährige Krieg," 1791.	Birmingham Riots, 1791.	Flight of Louis XVI from Paris, 1791.
Robert Burns, 1759–1796. (poet).	Goethe: "Reinecke Fuchs," 1794.	Battle of the Nile, 1798.	September Massacres in Paris, 1792.
Thomas Paine, 1737–1809. (social reformer).	"Wilhelm Meister," 1795.	Bank of England built.	Reign of Terror in France, 1793.
William Godwin, 1756–1836. (social reformer).	Schiller: "Wallenstein," 1798.	Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1800.	Fall of the Girondists, 1793.
William Paley, 1745–1805. (theologian).	Goethe: "Hermann und Dorothea," 1798.	Penalties imposed on combinations to raise wages, 1800.	Fall of Robespierre, 1794.
Ann Radcliffe, 1764–1823. (novelist).	Schiller: "Maria Stuart," 1800.		The Directorate, 1795.
Jeremy Bentham, 1748–1832. (economist).	Hegel, 1770–1831.		Napoleon, 1769–1821.
Robert Southey, 1774–1843. (poet).	Chateaubriand: "Atalanta," 1801.	First Factory Act, 1802.	The Consulate, 1799–1804.
Lyrical Ballads, 1798.	Schiller: "Wilhelm Tell," 1804.	War with France, 1803.	Canova (sc), 1757–1822.
William Wordsworth, 1770–1850. (poet).	Schelling, 1775–1854.	Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.	J. L. David (p), 1748–1825
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772–1834. (poet, critic, philosopher).	Death of Schiller, 1805.	Nelson, 1758–1805.	Beethoven (m), 1770–1827.
Charles Lamb, 1775–1834. (essayist, critic, dramatist, novelist).	Madame De Staël: "Corinne," 1806.	Abolition of Slave Trade, 1807.	
Walter Savage Landor, 1775–1864. (poet, author of "Imaginary Conversations").	Uhland, 1787–1862.	Peninsular War begins, 1808.	
	Goethe: "Faust," Pt. I, 1808.		
	Lamartine, 1792–1869.		

Thomas Robert Malthus, (economist). 1766–1834.
Hannah More, (essayist). 1745–1833.
Joanna Baillie, (writer of verse). 1762–1851.
Maria Edgeworth, (novelist, writer of moral tales). 1767–1849.

Edinburgh Review estab. 1802.
Sir Walter Scott, (novelist, poet). 1771–1832.
Jane Porter, (novelist). 1776–1850.
Thomas Moore, (poet). 1779–1852.
George Gordon, Lord Byron, (poet). 1788–1824.

Quarterly Review estab. 1808.
Jane Austen, (novelist). 1775–1817.
Percy Bysshe Shelley, (poet). 1792–1822.
Mary Shelley, (romance writer). 1797–1851.

Blackwood's Magazine estab. 1817.
William Hazlitt, (essayist, critic). 1778–1830.
John Keats, (poet). 1795–1821.
David Ricardo, (economist). 1772–1823.

The Brothers Grimm:
"Kinder- und Haus-Märchen," 1812.
Guizot, 1787–1874.
Schopenhauer:
"Die Welt als Wiele und Vorstellung," 1819.
Heine:
"Gedichte," 1822.
Leopardi:
"Bruta Minore," 1824.
Heine:
"Reisebilder," 1826–1831.
"Buch der Lieder," 1827.
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George IV, 1820–1830.
Trial of Queen Caroline, 1820.
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Battle of Jena, 1806.
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The Holy Alliance, 1815.
Weber (m), 1786–1826.
Schubert (m), 1797–1828.
Humboldt, 1769–1859.
Thorwaldsen (sc), 1770–1844.
Talleyrand, politician, 1754–1838.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD — *Concluded*

ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN LITERATURE	ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.	FOREIGN HISTORY, ETC.
Henry Hallam, (historian). 1777–1859.			Revolution in France, 1830.
Thomas De Quincey, (essayist, autobiographer). 1785–1859.			Fall of Charles X, 1830.
Mary Russell Mitford, (writer of fiction). 1786–1866.			
Francis Jeffrey, (editor, essayist). 1773–1850.		Penalties on combinations of workmen abolished, 1826.	
The Spectator estab. 1828.		Benefit of Clergy abolished, 1827.	
Felicia Hemans, (writer of verse). 1794–1835.		Catholic Emancipation Act, 1829.	
Thomas Campbell, (poet). 1777–1844.		William IV, 1830–1837.	

1. For the works of the chief authors of this period the student is referred to the text. Among the minor writers, Jane Porter is the author of "Scottish Chiefs"; Miss Mitford, "Our Village"; William Godwin, "Theory of Political Justice."

2. This is the period of the German philosophers.

3. In England the working-man is beginning to make himself heard.



THOMAS MOORE
1779-1852



CHAPTER V

CONDITIONS OF VICTORIAN LITERATURE

AFTER the short but great literary period which followed the revolutionary upheaval, England fell once more for a brief time into silence. Once more it seemed as if all the stories had been told and all the songs sung, as if the last inspiration had worn itself out. And then once more the spiritual force in the nation rose and pressed forth through new channels, prepared for it by new conditions. We have reached the period which has only just closed. We are so near to it that many of the forces which controlled it are yet imperfectly understood. But of one thing at least we may be fairly sure: life grows richer as it goes on, not poorer, and there was never a period when that beautiful utterance of life which we call literature had more vitality, variety, and expressiveness than during the last seventy years of the nineteenth century.

The conditions under which Victorian literature expanded were so complex that we feel timid in attempting to describe them; yet a few stand out so clearly that they must at least be suggested.

I. The Forces at Work

First, we all recognize, of course, man's conquest of material forces. This conquest seemed accom-

plished in the Renaissance, when men discovered the shape and size of this earth, and its relation to the starry universe; and we all know how these discoveries quickened the imagination. But they were no more startling than the discoveries made in our time, which have brought already under human control such forces as steam and electricity. We do not yet begin to know all that this new dominion of ours is to mean. But already it has given the earnest, though not the fulfilment, of the partial release of humanity from the heavy burden of material labor, and it has bound the nations into one and enabled us to evade, even more swiftly than Shakespeare's Ariel could do, the harsh tyranny of space. Peoples no longer live in remote isolation each from each; they share from day to day their daily life. Railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and the rest are not in themselves ends in which we can glory, and it is a mistake so to regard them; but they are means for the conquest of the world of matter by the world of mind, and they quicken and liberate the imagination.

Applied science.

The evolutionary theory.

But the triumph of mind over the material world achieved by natural science, sinks into insignificance beside the transformation of the world of thought by scientific theory. It was in 1859 that Darwin's "Origin of Species," probably the most epoch-making book of the modern world, was published. From this time on and even earlier, the great principle of evolution began to make its way. Slowly men realized that the knowledge of this principle brought a new revelation of the method and significance of natural law, and of the past history of the visible world;

more slowly yet they became aware that it had profound, almost revolutionary significance in almost every sphere of thought. The infusion of evolutionary method and evolutionary conceptions into religion, ethics, sociology, criticism, was the chief intellectual achievement of the nineteenth century. As a mere theory of process and relations in the natural world, evolution would not concern us here: as a principle of interpretation applied more and more in every department of human activity, it has pervaded and profoundly modified our literature.

The social movement.

The social situation, in the presence of which modern authors have written, has been one of absorbing and dramatic interest. We saw how profoundly Europe was stirred at the end of the eighteenth century by the new cry for brotherhood and freedom; we saw how, despite the unconquerable idealism of the poets, society succumbed to a conservative reaction. There was little democratic passion or hope stirring in English hearts when Victoria came to the throne. Yet an ideal, once seen by the race, never quite vanishes. Democracy during the nineteenth century has advanced, often by ways undreamed of. But it has met with serious checks and unforeseen dangers. The aristocracy of birth has been growing gradually weaker over Europe; our great American civilization has been built up without it. But a new aristocracy threatens us, even worse, because more ignobly devoid of appeal to the imagination, — the aristocracy of money. Again, modern life has seemed to consign the poor to a new bondage. While the middle classes have risen to prosperity and power, the working classes have

remained in material and spiritual need. Political freedom has as yet availed them little. At the end of the eighteenth century an industrial revolution as important as the political, though less noted at the time, substituted machine labor for hand labor, and industry which had been for the most part for use became industry for profit. Putting the machines in the hands of the employing class, this revolution threw the laboring people, by whose daily work society subsists, into a sharply defined class by themselves, and into conditions in some ways peculiarly painful and degrading. All these things modern literature has noted. The cry of the toilers makes itself ever more clearly heard through our noblest books. Our authors have turned from visions like Shelley's to observation and experiment; they have believed in evolution rather than in revolution. Hope of a nobler social order has at times seemed far away, but it has never died. Social study and social passion are among the most distinctive features of Victorian literature, especially of Victorian prose.

The religious movement.

The period of experiment on which men entered at the end of the eighteenth century did not confine itself to social matters; it affected the religious world also. People were driven to question their relations to God as well as their relations to their fellow-men. The authority of the Church was as much weakened as that of the old idea of the State. Unfortunately, during the searching experience of the Revolution, the Christian Church had sided with the party of privilege and wealth rather than with those who were striving for the independence of

the people, or with the cause of freedom; and this choice of hers had sadly loosened her hold, not only on the working classes, but on many of the pure spirits who made a religion of humanity. We can not wonder that the Church chose in this way, when we remember the condition of Christianity in the eighteenth century; but all Christian people must regret it, for the effect of this false step is still felt to-day. Many other reasons weakened the hold of historic creeds; and the nineteenth century, in every European country, has been a time of doubt and of spiritual striving. Perhaps on this very account it has been a time of intense spiritual earnestness. "The torpor of assurance," to use a phrase of Browning's, has been well shaken from our creed. A little after the middle of the century came the great expansion due to the introduction of evolutionary theory. This theory affected religious conceptions very powerfully, strengthening at first the forces that made for denial and scepticism, and later transforming many of the outlying and more mechanical modes of religious thought. All this ferment of religious inquiry, this exultant pleasure in escape from narrow dogma, this lament for dead faith, this joy in faith reconquered, all the phases of profound interest in the life of the soul which characterize modern life, are expressed in Victorian literature, especially in Victorian poetry.

The æsthetic movement.

Many other forces have of course found expression in modern literature. The nineteenth century knew a great movement toward beauty, which poets and prose writers did as much as artists to foster; it knew a quickened desire to penetrate the secrets of

Nature with loving heart and mind. These things and others we shall watch as we come to read the authors who have interpreted for us the last stages of that great story which we have followed from the beginning — the story of the imaginative life of the English race as shown in English letters.

II. The Decade of Origins

A backward glance.

It is rather arbitrary to call a literary period by the name of a sovereign, but the last period of our English literature does almost exactly coincide with the reign of Victoria although it begins a few years before she ascended the throne. It is strange to see how many of the great men of the revolutionary period had been swept away before her accession. Keats, Shelley, Byron, had all died, in the inverse order of their ages, before 1825. Another decade, and the older men, Hazlitt, Scott, Coleridge, and Lamb, were hushed, while Wordsworth's work as a poet, though not as a man, was practically over. The silent air waited for new voices, and in the ten years between 1830 and 1840 new voices made themselves heard.

Social and religious significance.

This is one of the most significant and interesting decades in our literary history: a birth-decade, in which we see the first appearance of the two great forces that, as we have said, stand out as most compelling in the confusion of modern life: the force of social unrest, the force of religious inquiry. At the beginning, the movement culminating in the Reform Bill definitely placed political power in the hands of the middle class; at the end we are confronted with

Chartism, the first effort, significant if feeble, at self-assertion on the part of the working class. Religiously, this was the beginning of that strong spiritual movement, led by John Henry Newman and his colleagues, which stirred England to the depths, with its appeal for a return to strict self-renunciation and to the faith and practice of the primitive Church. Under the inspiration of John Stuart Mill and his fellows a strong sceptical movement was also gathering force, after its fashion as true a witness to moral earnestness as the Catholic revival; and at the same time men of the type of Frederick Denison Maurice, formed by the influence of Coleridge, were beginning to feel their way toward a Christianity which should be the home at once of faith and of freedom.

First appearance of Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, Carlyle, Newman.

The first books of Tennyson and of Browning were published in this decade; with these, Victorian poetry began. Victorian essay opened significantly with Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus,"—the book which more than any other one struck the key-note of the new age,—and with such of the "Tracts for the Times" as were written by Newman and Pusey. It is worth while to remember one special year, 1833, for Tennyson's first poems of importance, Browning's earliest poem, "Pauline," the first of the "Tracts for the Times," and "Sartor Resartus," were in this year all given to the world. One short year later, and Victorian fiction gave promise, in Dickens's "Sketches by Boz," of its long and brilliant career, and the "Pickwick Papers" in 1836, and "Oliver Twist" in 1837, showed that the career was fairly begun; in 1837 the great name of Thackeray, whom we couple with Dickens as we couple Browning with Tennyson, appears with the "Yellowplush Papers."

Victorian fiction, Victorian essay, Victorian poetry, then are well on their way before this decade has closed. We shall study these three in successive chapters. It is difficult to say which has been the greatest. Remembering the copiousness, flexibility, and power of modern prose, the expressiveness of our novels, the force and beauty of our essays, we are ready to exclaim that prose is the characteristic art form of modern life; but the words hesitate on our lips, as the incommunicable grace of a lyric from Tennyson, the imagery of a sonnet from Rossetti, some poignant phrase from Browning, or some haunting melody from Swinburne, float reproachfully through the mind. The truth would seem to be that at last the two great instruments of literary expression are equally mature, and that they hold their own in harmonious and balanced power. Assuredly there seems to be need of both of them, adequately to render the eager and varied life of the Victorian age.

Difficulties of judgment in modern literature.

It is well for us to remember, as we approach this literature, so full of special interest to us, the caution of Matthew Arnold. He warns us that there are three possible estimates of literature: the historic, the personal, and the real. Of these the real becomes more and more difficult to obtain as we come near to our own days, the historic and the personal become more alluring. We can learn to know the movement of life in the times just preceding our own better through the study of Victorian literature than in any other way. We can also find personal friends who will help us in the inner life of mind and soul, more readily perhaps among modern authors than among any others. It is right and well for us

to do both these things; only we must not confuse proportions, and we must avoid dogmatism. It is unwise to make assertions about the absolute and permanent value of modern books.

REFERENCE BOOKS

TRAILL, Social England, Vol. VI. SAINTSBURY, History of Nineteeth-century Literature. GOSSE, Modern English Literature. JUSTIN MCCARTHY, History of Our Own Times. DOWDEN, Studies in Literature; The Scientific Movement and Literature; Transcripts and Studies, Victorian Literature. FREDERIC HARRISON, Victorian Literature.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

It would be helpful if the services of other departments could be engaged at this point for one or two general talks on the Political and Social History of the Victorian Age, the Scientific Movement and its Reaction on Literature, the Modern Artistic Movement and its Relations to Literature, the Oxford Movement in its Literary Connections.

CHAPTER VI

VICTORIAN FICTION

Realism of Victorian literature.

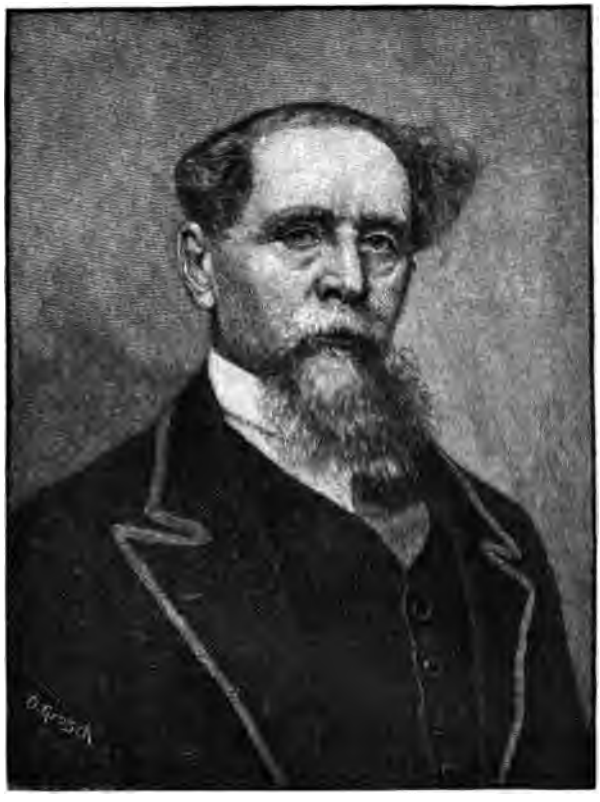
ONE of the best ways to understand m land is to read the great Victorian the novel, in these latter days, has pres and nearer to life. We have had, it is strong writers of romance; but on the wh tion of the great masters has reverted to t tradition of the eighteenth century. Rea is sure to be the cry of an age possesse with the desire for knowledge of all kinds, lar for self-knowledge; and the novel, th some conventions, lends itself to realism than does any other art form.

Curiously enough, it is the very hardes art to do, to show life exactly as it is. move toward realism as far as it can, the better, — so long as it does not quite arriv as it wholly arrived it would cease to be can watch this gradual penetration into very interesting way through Victorian fi

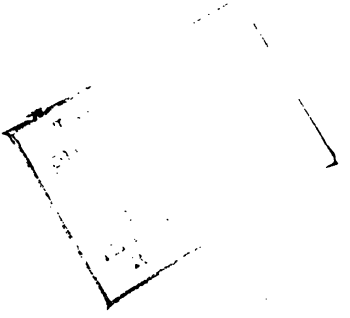
I. Charles Dickens

1812–1870.

Dickens is the first revealer of modern tion; and what a revelation it is! His r just the type that we should expect earl ary development, for it is realism of sight.



CHARLES DICKENS
1812-1870



English novelist has had such power to make us see the world he watched. Analyze a chapter of Dickens, and note how largely it is made up of visual images. The great presence of London is around us as we read him; we tread its streets, watch its darkly flowing river, penetrate its foulest haunts. Or, we are in the fresh country, and the old life of the inn and the coach slips gayly along before our inner eyes. People, too, throng upon our vision: the plain, often the poor, people of the Victorian world. We see their clothes, we note their gestures; we should know them anywhere.

His realism visual

Dickens had the best sort of training to make his imagination a mirror in this way. He never had any time to think about life; he was too busy looking at it. His father (whom he sketched in Mr. Micawber) and his mother (whom he sketched in Mrs. Nickleby) seem to have been rather irresponsible about their offspring; at least, when Mr. Dickens, who was a poor clerk in the Navy Office, fell into debt, his second son Charles, a sensitive little fellow eleven years old, was tossed into the mælstrom of London, there to fend for himself and pick up a living by pasting labels on blacking bottles in a big warehouse. He was a dreamy child; before this time he had fed his mind on the strong fiction of the eighteenth century, which he found in an attic. His experience in the warehouse he has described for us in "David Copperfield." It did not last long, and he was better taken care of afterward; but his only university — and to develop his unique genius the best he could have had — was the London streets. We find him at fifteen in an attorney's office, a little

His training.

later a reporter, always haunting the theatre and intimate with the life of the stage, and picking up in all these experiences the material for his novels.

His work.

Fame came to him early. All England laughed over the "Pickwick Papers," published in monthly instalments when he was twenty-four years old. They were a series of humorous character sketches, in the good old English tradition of very broad fun, but free from the coarseness which had disfigured the fun of the last century. It was enough to make the book immortal that here Sam Weller made his bow to the English public. The next year Dickens brought out in the same fashion his first real novel, "Oliver Twist." This was a glaring melodrama, with an impossible plot, very little humor, and much bad pathos; it showed how much false romanticism still clung to the author, but it contained descriptions of the life of London thieves and outcasts startling in vividness and truth. Melodrama and farce, with which Dickens thus introduced himself to the public, continued to be the controlling types of his work. "Nicholas Nickleby" came next, reverting to the type of Pickwick, but less farcical. It was a story of roving adventure, loosely strung together, bubbling over with delightful fun and sympathy. Then, for nearly thirty years, the fecund genius of Dickens continued to pour forth books that delighted the English public. They were all novels of plot or of adventure, though sometimes he combined the two. Those in which adventure dominates are by far the best. Dickens never compassed realism in plot, though he could construct a fairly ingenious melodrama; the power of his work is in his

"Pickwick Papers," 1836.

"Oliver Twist," 1837.

"Nicholas Nickleby," 1838.

"Old Curiosity Shop," 1840.

"Martin Chuzzlewit," 1843.

"Christmas Carol," 1843.

gift of reproducing the aspect of life, and in his irresistible humor. It is humor of the simplest, genial, infectious, and we treasure it because it makes us forget that life has any moral problems. No one can think of problems while Mr. Micawber is making a speech. Dickens was supposed in his own day to be master of the pathetic also, but his pathos is usually of the self-conscious kind started by Richardson, and it rings a little false to-day.

"Dombey and Son," 1846.
"David Copperfield," 1850.
"Bleak House," 1852.
"Hard Times," 1854.
"Little Dorrit," 1855.
"Tale of Two Cities," 1859.
"Our Mutual Friend," 1864.

The best of these novels of adventure is "David Copperfield"; surely a book to live as long as kindly English folk still read their mother tongue. One great plot novel also Dickens wrote, which stands curiously apart from his other work. It is the "Tale of Two Cities," a story of the French Revolution, conceived under the inspiration of Carlyle. The terror of the time gathers visibly before our eyes as we read.

Dickens's highly nervous organization wore itself out early. He took to imitating himself in his later books; they are often mannered, and the humor is forced. He added to the strain of writing the excitement of lectures and public readings, in England and America, and he died when only fifty-eight years old.

Dickens's death.

Dickens's strongest moral impulse is his compassion for the poor. He never discovered the world of manual workers, though he tried to treat it in "Hard Times," but the whole world of lower trade and poverty in London lives in his pages. Sometimes the reformer spoils the artist, yet we love Dickens the better for his unfailing compassion toward suffering children in workhouses or streets,

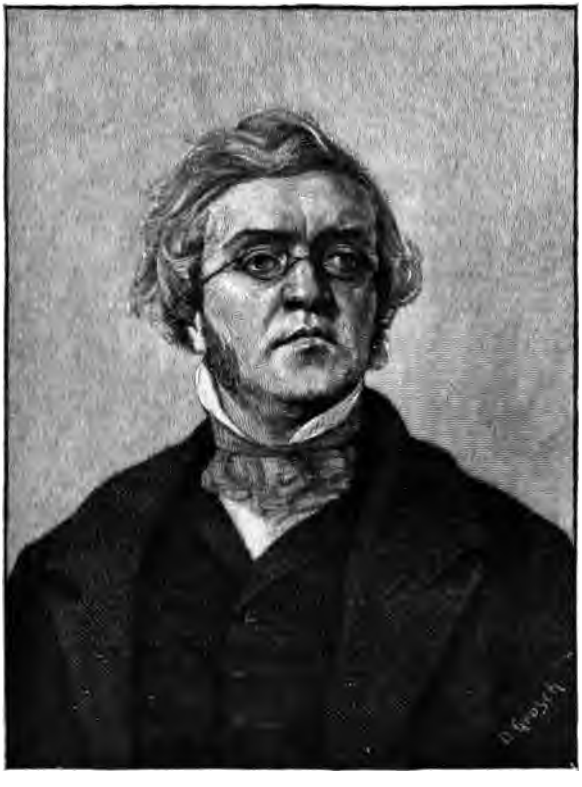
His scope and spirit.

toward prisoners, toward victims of the cruelty of man, and for his efforts to right abuses. Better than any special crusade, however, is his spirit of sympathy for all sorts and conditions of men, except indeed, for the very rich, whom he disliked too much to describe them well. Dickens has many crude and obvious faults. He lacks the psychological insight of later novelists; he has no spiritual vision; he caricatures and distorts till we feel in reading him that we are looking at life indeed, but at life reflected as it were in a convex mirror. But it is impossible to live with Dickens and not feel our sympathy for our fellow-men quickened and broadened. What better thing can a novelist do for us?

II. William Makepeace Thackeray

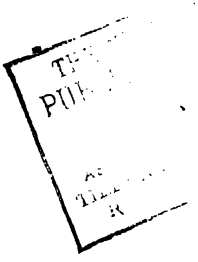
1811-1863. Thackeray took English fiction into precisely the regions which Dickens could not enter. He had just the sort of antecedents and training to make this possible for him. He was a gentleman born. His mother married for her second husband an Anglo-Indian officer said to be the original of Colonel Newcome. Thackeray was sent home from India to be educated, and studied at the famous Charter House school, and then at Cambridge University. He had Bohemian tastes, however, and drifted to Paris, where he studied art for a while. It is interesting that Dickens's leaning, apart from literature, was toward the stage, Thackeray's toward art. He saw more or less of various phases of European life, an opportunity never given to Dickens, most useful to a novelist of society.

His training.



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
1811-1863





Thackeray was a kindly, shy, immensely clever man. He began to write when still very young, but he did not win fame early, like Dickens, though his lovers to-day delight in every word of his early humorous sketches. He was thirty-six when his first great novel, "Vanity Fair," was published. This was a story of English society at the time of the battle of Waterloo; it centres in the amazing figure of Becky Sharp, the adventuress, who passes through all social grades like a rocket, and then falls like a rocket into the mire. The next great novel was "Pendennis," in 1850; this dealt with strictly contemporary life. In 1852 came Thackeray's novel of the eighteenth century, "Henry Esmond"; it is considered by many the best historical novel in English. In 1854 "The Newcomes" gave a picture of modern life, sweeter in tone than any Thackeray had before presented, though very sad. "The Virginians," another historical novel, is inferior to "Esmond," and Thackeray is not at his best in his other long finished novel, "Philip."

His work.

"Vanity Fair," 1847.

"Pendennis," 1850.

"Henry Esmond," 1852.

"The Newcomes," 1854.

"The Virginians," 1857.

"Philip," 1861.

Thackeray wrote lectures as well as novels; in particular, "The English Humourists" and "The Four Georges," dealing with that eighteenth century which he knew and loved so well. His private life was clouded with sorrow. His one longing was for simple domestic tenderness, and his wife, early in their marriage, became insane. He was a lonely man, but cheered by the love of friends and later of his daughters. He lectured in England and in our own country, though not so much as Dickens. His life was really in his books, which were wonderfully real to him. In 1863 he died.

"English Humourists," 1853.

"The Four Georges," 1860.

Thackeray's death.

Thackeray's plots are not so much in evidence as Dickens's, and it is almost possible to read him without realizing that his books have any plot at all. Yet when we come to think we shall see that in some, at least, of his books, as "Vanity Fair" and "Henry Esmond," he tells his story in the main very well, though he sometimes loses sight of proportions and has to crowd it at the end. But Thackeray's art is always unobtrusive. The same thing is emphatically true of his style. It is a delightful style, quite different from that of Dickens, and far more charming. His books seem to slip along with the ease and sparkle of well-bred conversation, but their apparent simplicity is really the highest art, as any one will see who tries to write like them. Thackeray pauses a great deal in his narrative for discursive comment, and this habit of his might be tedious were his style not so perfect; as it is, his digressions are a great charm. Prose has never had a truer, a more legitimate, melody of movement than he imparted to it.

His art.

It is fortunate that he has a more subtle style than Dickens, for he had to describe more subtle people. Dickens begins with the inhabitants of the city slums, and moves easily among poor and simple folk till he reaches the merchant class; his studies are never successful when he goes higher. But Thackeray moves upward, quite out of the world of trade, among the intellectual and professional classes, and the aristocracy. He does not visualize his world as Dickens does; he notes less the outward aspect of men, than their manners, their interests, their relations. He sees the mind, and

His social pictures.

shows us the play of motives in it, conscious and unconscious.

It is not a very cheerful picture that he gives us. Dickens's unthinking classes are sound and kindly at heart, though they live on a level not so very much above the animal. But Thackeray's polished and educated people are usually worldly through and through. They have learned how to make, externally, a fine art of life, but they are heartless underneath. We cannot help feeling that the society which Thackeray describes is almost hopelessly materialized. Money is of paramount importance in it. His people are consumed by that sort of personal ambition which has free play under our modern conditions, where men are no longer born into classes in which they have to stay, but can make their way, if they are clever enough, from class to class. A spirit of pushing unrest pervades Thackeray's world.

His animus.

No one reverences simple goodness, innocence, rectitude, more than Thackeray does; no one describes them with more winning penetration and sympathy. But he does not see them very often. He can draw a noble hero, to be sure, which Dickens never could do; a Dobbin, a Henry Esmond, and, dearest of all, the old soldier with the heart of a child, Colonel Newcome. But unluckily most of the good people in his books are a little dull. This is not true of Henry Esmond, his hero of the eighteenth century, but it is true of the characters in his other books. His good people live apart from the rush and push of life; they never enter Vanity Fair at all, far less do they dwell there, as some of Bunyan's pilgrims do, and try to help the inhabitants of the place. No,

no, Thackeray seems to say, do not draw near to that Fair. It is a fascinating place, to be sure; all the wit of the world is there, and the intelligence, and the interest and the charm; but if you enter it you are lost. Better stay outside and be a little stupid if necessary, but keep your heart fresh.

One reason why Thackeray shows us so few ideals is that, even more than Dickens, he reflects the tendency of our democratic times to fasten attention on the average. Shakespeare and his compeers sought the ideal and the heroic. Thackeray and his fellows deliberately took life as they found it; and they lived at a time when idealism in society was at low ebb. If we were to infer the interests, occupations, and aims of society at the early Victorian period from the novels of the time, we should certainly be a little discouraged. It is true, as a keen critic has recently said, that we suffer in reading Thackeray's works from an absence of noble expectation.

Yet it would be a great mistake to call Thackeray a cynic, as has sometimes been done. He certainly does not inspire his readers with a militant desire to conquer evil; his tone is half playful, half melancholy, a little fatalistic. Nor do his books make for definite reforms like those of Dickens. But he develops a fastidious disgust for hypocrisy and materialism, and a delicate taste for all things sweet and pure. His keen humor always casts ridicule in the right place. His pathos is true and profound, never to be forgotten; springing, not like that of Dickens from material accidents, like the death of children or the sufferings of the feeble-minded, but from deeper sources. And in "Henry Esmond," where he



GEORGE ELIOT

1820-1881

After the etching by Rajon





escapes from the depressing atmosphere of the modern world, he gives us a picture of life, not idealized nor sentimentalized, but full of attraction.

III. Mary Anne Evans (George Eliot)

We turn to George Eliot, the only novelist of her time who can claim a fairly assured place beside Thackeray and Dickens. We have seen how sweeping were the views of life which these earlier writers gave us. Their works are a great panorama of the society of the period. Their canvases are crowded by figures, — in one of Dickens's novels there are seventy-five characters, in one of Thackeray's over sixty; they show us people, always in social groups, in varied relations with their fellowmen. Of that large part of life which is lived in solitude they tell us little. But modern realism was to press nearer to the individual heart and conscience, to the hidden places of experience, than these great masters had done. 1820-1881. Realism of the inner life.

Mary Anne, or Marian, Evans, better known by her pen name, was the daughter of a carpenter who afterward became land agent; she was born in Warwickshire, the beautiful county of Shakespeare. She did not know city life in her childhood as Thackeray and Dickens did; she grew up in the sweet, rural, old-fashioned England which was to furnish subjects and setting for her earlier books. Her life.

As a little girl, the strongest fact in her life was her intense devotion to her brother; she has told us about it in a pretty series of sonnets, "Brother and Sister." Her affections were always profound. Her

mother died while she was very young, and a little school life and solitary years of keeping house for her father made up her girlhood. She was fervently evangelical at this time, and had serious scruples about reading novels. But when she was twenty-two years old her father and she moved to Coventry; here she became intimate with some clever people of radical views, and slipped with remarkable ease away from her early faith. She never regained it; but the problems of the ethical life continued always to be the most important things in the world to her. She translated at this time a famous radical German book, Strauss's "Life of Jesus." Her change of faith was a great grief to her father, but the two became reconciled, and she cared tenderly for his last years.

After her father's death, Miss Evans spent a winter in Geneva, for rest, and returned to London as an editor of the *Westminster Review*, the Liberal organ. This was an honorable position for a woman; she must already have made her mark as a person of intellect. In London she met the most interesting people of the time; not the people of Dickens's world, nor of Thackeray's, but the leaders of thought and art. She formed two relations which proved most significant to her. One was a close friendship with Herbert Spencer, the philosopher of the new school of evolutionary thought. George Eliot became an ardent evolutionist, and eagerly attempted during all the rest of her life to apply evolutionary principles to the moral life of the race. The other relation was with George Henry Lewes, a brilliant man of letters, author, among other things, of the

standard life of Goethe. She defied the laws of marriage to unite her fortunes to those of Lewes; and she now knew happiness for the first time, though not an unmixed happiness. They studied, thought, and travelled together. It was a shock and surprise to her friends when after his death, in 1878, she married a young man, much her junior, J. W. Cross. But she was happy for a few months in this second union. She died, however, very soon.

Till she was thirty-seven years old George Eliot showed no sign of creative power. It was Lewes's ardent belief in her that first called this power out. Very timidly she wrote her first stories, "Scenes of Clerical Life," and sent them under the pseudonym since so famous to *Blackwood's Magazine*. They were accepted, and encouraged by their success she wrote her first novel, "Adam Bede," a story of rural England at the end of the previous century. All the world, reading this book, knew that a great new novelist had appeared. Dickens was one of the first to divine that the book was written by a woman. Soon the veil was dropped, and George Eliot, with a tremulous sense of responsibility toward the gift so unexpectedly discovered, devoted her life to writing fiction.

Her work.

"Scenes of Clerical Life," 1858.

"Adam Bede," 1859.

"The Mill on the Floss" held in the first and best part charming reminiscences of her own eager childhood, and was again a story of country life. "Silas Marner" is perhaps the most perfect idyl in English. "Romola" was a more ambitious book; it is George Eliot's historical novel, and treats of the Florence of the Renaissance. "Felix Holt," her weakest novel, is a story of the radical movement at the time of the

"The Mill on the Floss," 1860.

"Silas Marner," 1861.

"Romola," 1863.

"Felix Holt," 1866.

"Middlemarch," 1872.
"Daniel Deronda," 1876.
"The Spanish Gypsy," 1868.

Reform Bill. Then came the last great novels, "Middlemarch" and "Daniel Deronda," both dealing with the modern English life of the upper class, but adding in "Daniel Deronda" a strong contrast in the careful study of the modern Jews. "The Spanish Gypsy," a drama in verse, and certain other poems, and a series of essays, "Impressions of Theophrastus Such," complete George Eliot's literary output.

Her scope.

Where Thackeray and Dickens study the phenomena of society, George Eliot studies those of the soul.

Early books.

Her early books treat, with no touch of melodrama or satire, but with refreshing simplicity and insight, the great primal normal passions which shape the life of all men. Hardy has followed her in this rich field. Most people prefer these early books to the later ones, and they certainly have more charm. They are full of humor, of sympathy; we escape from city streets and drawing-rooms to the fragrance of fertile lowlands, and the wide unfevered light of the sky. These books strengthen our sanity. "Adam Bede" in particular, though it tells a tragedy, is a story full of rest. Adam himself, probably the first workman hero in fiction, and Dinah Morris, that fair type of spiritual womanhood, enrich our life by their friendship.

Rarely, however, does George Eliot show us a normal and peaceful society. Already, in "The Mill on the Floss," the modern forces of unrest have begun to stir, and the wistful, passionate figure of Maggie stands out in strange relief against the idyllic and humorous background. George Eliot in her later books moved farther and farther away from the life known to her childhood. In "Romola"

Later books.

the Florentine setting but slightly disguises the intellectual and spiritual conditions of modern England. "Middlemarch" and "Daniel Deronda" deal with the special moral strivings of thoughtful modern men and women. Just on this account they will probably not live as long as the earlier books. Moreover, they have less free play of humor, less beauty of setting. But if we may surmise their real value to be less, their historic value at least is greater. Nowhere else have we an intellect in which creative and critical instincts are so finely balanced, showing us the experience of the modern world, just waking to self-consciousness. The society which George Eliot gives as her background is essentially the same as that pictured by her predecessors, but against it she delineates individuals whose minds and consciences are vibrating to new forces.

The outcome in "Middlemarch" is melancholy. The best people in the book beat in vain against the conventions that surround them, and make failures of their lives. "Daniel Deronda" is a far more cheering picture. Here George Eliot has done what modern fiction has rarely attempted, — drawn for us a true hero. Many think that she has failed, but the conception is well worth study. If we put it beside Sir Charles Grandison, we see that the ideal of heroism in England is rising again, though it is strangely different from what it was in the old days of Beowulf and Roland. George Eliot's hero, however, has at least discovered again that incentive for lack of which heroism perishes: some great aim to strive for.

Her social philosophy.

All these books of George Eliot's are full, not only of observation, but of reflection. She had been

trained as thinker and scholar before she began to write, and the results are clearly evident. Some think they enrich her work, some think they deaden it. She is possessed by a large conception of life as an organic whole, by a sense of the power and the consequent claim of heredity and environment. Her effort is to derive a religion from this philosophy; to show how the ethical values of life may be maintained, Christianity being tacitly put out of sight. Hers is the religion of humanity; her books instil at every turn the truth that peace can only be won by renunciation, by yielding the claims of personal desire to the good of a larger whole. They are stern books and sad, when rightly read, but everywhere noble.

IV. Other Novelists

We have no time to speak of the bewildering output of novels only less excellent than those which we have discussed. Had we more space, many an author would call for full treatment. We should dwell on Charlotte Brontë and her sister Emily, women whose fervid lonely passion burns through their troubling books; on Anthony Trollope, a more copious and less brilliant Thackeray, novelist of manners, of political, domestic, and religious life; on Charles Reade, one of the best constructors of plots, and no mean delineator of character; on Charles Kingsley, most sympathetic of writers, author of many books, from fairy tales to historical novels, that have not yet lost the freshness of their charm nor their power to lift men into finer

manhood; on George MacDonald, novelist of Scottish life, dowered with the spiritual insight and poetic imagination of the Celt; on the most recent of them all, loved so well that one would not characterize him, so near us that one could not if one would, that other Scotchman of heroic temper, Robert Louis Stevenson. Before Stevenson died he had taken his place as master of a very perfect prose style; and his essays — individual and charming in their own way as those of Lamb — are perhaps his most finished achievement. He was a leader in the modern romantic reaction, and gave promise of pressing into the front rank among novelists. His romanticism includes not only the simple and obvious novel of adventure, such as "Treasure Island," but a more subtle and psychologic type, as in "The Master of Ballantrae," and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Robert Louis Stevenson 1850–1894.

More significant, perhaps, than any one of these are Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. Hardy's books confine themselves to one small section of England, the ancient kingdom of Wessex: here he studies with rich humor, tragic intensity, and poetic feeling, the characteristics of a population rooted to the soil. He is the most pessimistic of English novelists. His impassioned love for the ancient earth, and for the sacred ties that bind man to it, are the only wholesome elements in a view of life limited, sombre, charged with pain.

Thomas Hardy, 1840–

Meredith, on the other hand, takes us into the most intellectual society presented by any Victorian novelist, a society where both men and women think keenly and talk almost too brilliantly. Not fearful of tragedy, as "Beauchamp's Career" and "Richard

George Meredith, 1828–

Feverel" may witness, Meredith finds in comedy his most native sphere. His best and happiest people escape from convention on the one hand, and wilful self-assertion on the other, into harmonious relation to the larger facts of life. "Richard Feverel," Meredith's first great novel, was published in 1859, the same year as "Adam Bede." Like Browning, he waited long for his audience, but won it at last. His work is mannered and lacking in large simplicity; but for those who can receive it, it is singularly invigorating.

Both Meredith and Hardy are powerful in their delineation of life, but behind the delineation one feels theories and large questionings, such as are absent from Scott and Dickens. Steeped in evolutionary thought, the spirit of the age of search has descended upon them. But if the last word of Hardy is Fate, the last word of Meredith is a disciplined freedom.

Looking at Victorian fiction as a whole, we see in it an art-form that becomes constantly more expressive. It presents moreover a series of social documents of the highest significance. All classes have been adequately studied in it except the working people, and they are to-day coming to the front more and more. We see in it a significant witness to the growing power of analysis and to the extension of human sympathy that mark our modern times. Whether we see also books that will hold their own among the permanent imaginative treasures of the race, it is impossible to say. Probably English fiction is inferior in artistic power and in the large grasp of human experience to the fiction of France and Russia.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Life of Dickens, FORSTER (3 vols.). WARD, English Men of Letters. MARZIALS, Great Writers Series. Life of Thackeray, TROLLOPE, English Men of Letters. Introductions by Mrs. RITCHIE to Biographical Edition. Life of George Eliot, W. Cross (told in extracts from her own letters), O. BROWNING (Great Writers Series). GEORGE COOKE, George Eliot: a Critical Study. M. BLIND, George Eliot. Essays on Thackeray and Dickens in BAGEHOT'S Literary Studies, in ANDREW LANG'S Letters to Dead Authors, in MASSON'S British Novelists and their Styles. Essay on George Eliot, DOWDEN; Studies in Literature, HUTTON, Modern Guides, etc. SCUDDER, Social Ideals in English Letters, Part II, Chs. IV, V, VI.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

Dickens would best be approached through "A Tale of Two Cities" and "David Copperfield." The first offers fine opportunities for studies of plot structure, the second for studies in character drawing. "Henry Esmond" and "The Newcomes" are the most desirable books from Thackeray for young students. It is interesting to treat Dickens and Thackeray in parallel, comparative work, placing side by side their social scope, their style, their methods in humor and pathos, their conception of heroism, etc. Drill in writing brief character studies; special topics on child life, on the ideal for women, on the methods in description, etc., can be multiplied *ad libitum*.

The best single novel of George Eliot's for beginners is "Silas Marner," though it illustrates only part of her powers. It shows, however, her delicate touch, her interest in regions of personality controlled by conscience, her sympathy with rural life, with child life, etc. "Romola," if added, affords varied material for study. Beside analysis of the book in itself, the story may instructively be put beside "A Tale of Two Cities" and "Henry Esmond." Show why our great Victorian novelists chose three so different fields for their three historical novels. Compare their choice with that of Scott, and explain why none of them returned, as he did, to the middle ages.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Talks on the personality of the different novelists, and on their entire product, would be very valuable.

CHAPTER VII

VICTORIAN ESSAYISTS

I. Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800–1859

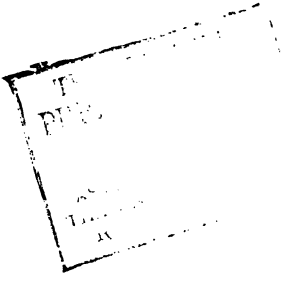
WE can see from the writings of Thomas Babington Macaulay just what life looked like to an honest Englishman of vigorous intellect in the pause between the revolutionary idealists and the Victorian seekers. Macaulay's career, personal, political, and literary, was most honorable. He served his country well. He was a Whig; that is, he believed, guardedly, in a gradual advance toward constitutional freedom, and in liberty of thought. His ideal for society was a free field in which every man might push his way as far as he could. He was full of admiration for the material prosperity, the applied science, the intellectual enlightenment of his own day. That the next generation could be stirred to any deep discontent with things as they were, would have been inconceivable to him.

An essay on Milton, published when Macaulay was only twenty-five years old, decided him on a literary career. He followed it by a series of powerful essays on political, literary and historical subjects, published in the *Edinburgh Review*. These seemed at the time the last word of criticism, and they are still good reading, from their clear common sense, their hearty and healthy interest in all sorts of sub



THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY
1800-1859
After a photograph by Claudet





jects, and their vigorous if somewhat mechanical style. Meanwhile, he was in the House of Commons for several years, and his speeches, which produced a great impression on those who heard them, are perhaps still his best work. There is no imagination in Macaulay's prose, nor in his spirited verse, "The Lays of Ancient Rome," but there is much fine rhetoric.

His most important work is his "History of England," undertaken on his return from several years in India. It was planned to extend "from the accession of James I to a time within the memory of men now living," but Macaulay did not live to complete the task beyond the death of William III. His ambition was to do for real history what Scott had done for imaginary history; and he nearly realized it. His history is a sort of triumphant presentation of the gradual victory of liberal views, but he makes us see his period vividly, and holds our interest from first to last. The book inaugurated the literary histories of the Victorian age, the work of Froude, of Freeman, of Gardiner, of Green.

Macaulay died in 1859. He had reaped his full harvest of appreciation in his lifetime. He is hardly a characteristic author of the Victorian age; he belongs, as we have said, to the interregnum.

II. Thomas Carlyle

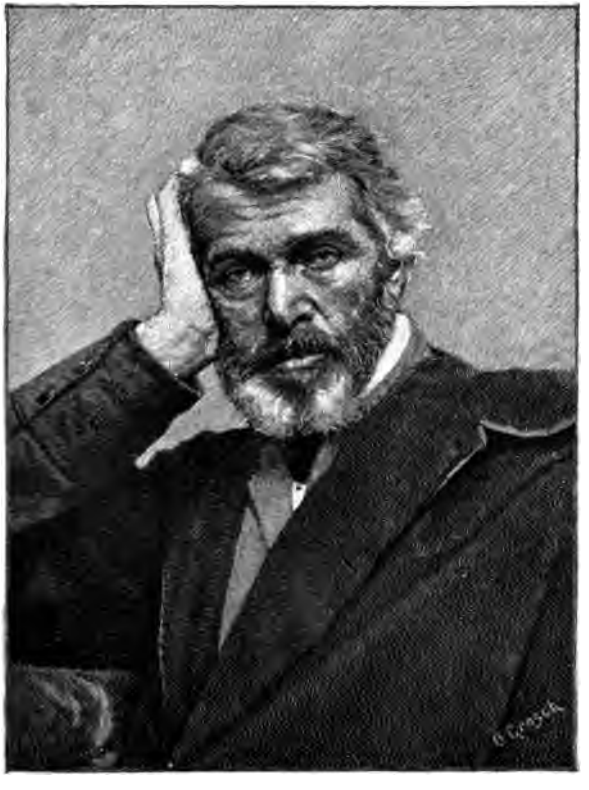
Thomas Carlyle, probably the greatest force in English letters during the first half of the Victorian age, was five years older than Macaulay; but he was the prophet of the next generation. It was given 1795–1881.

him to lead men into a spiritual region far different from any that Macaulay ever entered.

Parentage and early life.

Carlyle, like Burns, was a Scotchman. He was born in the little village of Ecclefechan, into a life like that described in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." His father was a mason; Carlyle said, in later life, that if he could write his books as well as his father had built his houses, he should be wholly content. His mother was a rugged, ignorant, deeply religious woman, who taught herself to write that she might write to her son, and whom that son all his long life loved more tenderly than he did any one else in the world.

Like many poor Scottish lads, young Carlyle went to the University of Edinburgh; he did much thinking there, if little learning; passed through a profound spiritual experience of religious struggle and doubt, ending in hard-won faith of his own kind; and found that his convictions would not allow him to fulfil his parents' desires by becoming a minister. He tried his hand therefore at teaching, at tutoring, at hackwork in literature; fell under the spell of the romantic literature of Germany, translated "Wilhelm Meister" and wrote a "Life of Schiller"; and made his way into the *Edinburgh Review* with a series of remarkable, though little noted, critical essays. Meanwhile, he married a Scotch girl of genius hardly less than his own, Jane Baillie Welsh; and, after a short time in Edinburgh, moved with his young wife to a property of hers called Craigenputtoch, on a lonely Scottish moor. There he brooded and searched his spirit, — cheered once by a visit, as out of the skies, from a young American named Ralph Waldo



THOMAS CARLYLE
1796-1881
From a photograph



Emerson, — till at last in that solitude the fire kindled, and Carlyle spake with his tongue. This first utterance was "Sartor Resartus," a strange book, semi-autobiographical, presenting with extraordinary eloquence, though in seeming medley, audacious thoughts concerning the religious and social conditions of the modern world.

Work.

Carlyle was thirty-seven years old at this time. Fame did not come to him easily or soon. He had served a hard apprenticeship of strife with doubt, poverty, and despair. And no wonder; for thoughts belonging to a new order were seething in his mind. "Sartor" had to struggle for recognition, and it was first published in book form in America. But slowly the men of the rising generation found in it what they wanted, and made a kind of Bible of it. Carlyle soon moved to London, and the history of his life became chiefly the history of his writings. The French Revolution seemed to him the most tremendous event in centuries; a time of death and birth. In 1837 appeared his history of that time, a book which is still unique. His emotional imagination caught the vibrations of the great revolutionary drama which were still in the air, and he did not so much write a regular history as transmit to all posterity the images and the emotions that accompanied those great years when democracy was born.

"Sartor Resartus," 1833.

"The French Revolution," 1837.

"Past and Present" and "Latter Day Pamphlets" continued the line of thought of "The French Revolution," and applied it to modern life. Carlyle's sense of the social dangers of our time burns clear and hot through these prophetic books. His edition of "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," and his monu-

"Chartism," 1839.

"Heroes and Hero-Worship," 1841.

"Past and Present," 1843.

"Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," 1845.

"Latter Day Pamphlets," 1850.

"Life of Sterling," 1851.

"History of Frederick II," 1858–1865.

Carlyle's death, 1881.

mental "History of Frederick the Great," though they represent the indefatigable work of many weary years, are less full of true force and fire. A course of lectures on "Heroes and Hero Worship," embodying his favorite idea of the strong man as the saviour of the world, has proved one of his most popular works, and his life of his friend, John Sterling, is a tender biography. The old giant lingered till 1881, heart-broken during the later years by the death of his wife; since his death, his copious letters and journals, sometimes injudiciously edited, have given us a strangely complete knowledge of his character, a strong character, full of the best if also of certain less fine traits of the peasant.

Carlyle's message.

Carlyle was profoundly discontented with his own time. It seemed to him plunged in materialism or dilettanteism, denying God and oblivious of the suffering of men. The misery of the industrial classes, above all, filled him with a fierce rage; not so much their physical misery, for poverty had few terrors for this hardy son of Scotch peasants, but the misery of their souls, deprived of their spiritual heritage. "That there should one man die ignorant who had capacity for knowledge," he cried, "this I call a tragedy, should it happen twenty times to the minute, as by some computations it does."[1] Carlyle traced social injustice back to religious unbelief. Himself far from the creed of his fathers, he, nevertheless, worshipped with profound faith the righteous law of the indwelling God.

In his youth he tried to bring the age the message it needed by "Germanizing the public." Later he

[1] "Sartor Resartus."

turned from criticism to direct invective and appeal. In opposition to the prevalent utilitarianism, he dwelt awestruck on the Divine Mystery in all things. In a society where the freedom of each man to do as he liked was considered the highest possible ideal, he was never weary of preaching man's absolute need to find some heroes to govern him. He pleaded for truth, reality, escape from cant; above all, he preached the gospel of work, till the shadows should fall.

Carlyle's style.

His perturbation, his scorn, his sorrow, his hope, he poured forth in a style absolutely individual. It is a dangerous style to imitate, but in his hands it is full of power. Carlyle always thought in pictures. When he writes history, no one sets people and events before us so vividly as he does; when he deals with ideas, his style is as full of pictures as ever, for he translates everything he wants to say into a metaphor. It is a style charged with emotion, — ironical, impassioned, eloquent. It is full of surprises; but it makes the reader think for himself, and suggests far more than it says. It was much influenced by Carlyle's German studies, and it is in the fullest sense a romantic style.

Carlyle's significance.

Carlyle was stronger in denunciation than in construction. He could tell men their faults more readily than he could tell them what to do. That is because he was a pioneer, pushing his own way in much bewilderment through shadowy paths. His power over the men of his day was largely due to the fact that he expressed the confusion of their own minds, yet clung firmly to eternal principles of truth and justice. He gives the impression of one who lives in the wilderness; he is the John the Baptist of a new

era. Living up to his voice with the note of the first century.

III. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

The voice of Carlyle reached those outside the Churches who had lost hold of the historic creeds and gave them something to cling to still; the voice of John Henry Newman drew men back within the fold of the Church of Christ. We cannot here speak of Newman's work as a theologian, of the process that led the leader of the Tractarian revival in the Anglican Church to the Church of Rome, nor of his wonderful personality. We can but mark, and that we must, his quality as a writer. No figure stands in a stronger contrast with that of Carlyle than that of this most gentle spiritual genius, so much his contemporary and so one with him in a number of the movements, literature and influences of the day. Carlyle, as much as the University of Edinburgh, knew was a self-made man. The strong will-power of Newman had renewed all the native graces of character, the most delicate power which we associate with the name. Newman's style is classical in its lucidity, its balance, and simplicity. It is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

feeling his almost irresistible sway. This is due partly to his literary art, but far more to his keen mind, and most of all to his stern, uplifted, holy spirit. Carlyle was the exponent of the storm and stress of the nineteenth century; Newman was a man of the thirteenth century strayed, almost it might seem by mistake, into the modern world.

"Apologia pro Vita Sua," 1864.

"Verses on Various Occasions," 1868.

IV. John Ruskin

In John Ruskin we find again a man essentially the product of his age, and one of its noblest leaders. Ruskin was the greatest disciple of Carlyle; but his early life and work were singularly different from those of his master. He was a son of privilege; he interpreted the beauty of nature and art to a delighted public till he was forty years old. Then a great change passed over his spirit, and for thirty years he sought to give his countrymen a fuller understanding of justice. It is a significant and dramatic career,—as if Spenser had suddenly turned into Wyclif, poet into reformer. Perhaps the two are not so far away from each other as people think.

1819-1900.

Ruskin was the only child of a rich wine-merchant. He grew up near London in a house with a big garden, in perfect security, solitude, and peace. The family took its pleasure in driving all over England and Scotland, and later France, Switzerland, and Italy; so Europe was his university. He received also a good academic education at Oxford, but this was of less importance to him. He was a singularly sensitive and chivalrous nature, and, when still hardly more than a boy, he took up his weapons

Parentage and early life.

in behalf of a great neglected landscape painter, Turner. The work grew on his hands; it became the first volume of "Modern Painters." The public received the book with enthusiasm; Ruskin had found his vocation. In 1860 the fifth volume crowned a noble achievement.

"Modern Painters," 1843–1860.

"'Modern Painters,'" said Ruskin in his old age, "taught the claim of all lower nature on the hearts of men." He therefore put the interpretation of Nature first, as the most important achievement of the book; but this was not its ostensible object. Two other things it accomplished: it vindicated the landscape art of English painters, especially of Turner; and it revealed to an indifferent world the power and beauty of the early religious art of Italy.

Work as critic of art.

These volumes do not represent all Ruskin's product between 1840 and 1860. He wrote during these years two other books of importance: "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," a treatise on the spiritual and structural principles of Gothic art, and "The Stones of Venice," a history of the decline of Venice, studied through the degeneration of her arts under the influence of the Renaissance. These books mark the culmination of that enthusiasm for the Gothic which springs from some deep region in the modern mind. It had begun, superficially, in the eighteenth century; Scott had given it picturesque romantic expression; the Oxford movement had consecrated it to ecclesiastical uses. Now Ruskin penetrated in an illuminating way its spirit, function, and history.

"Seven Lamps of Architecture," 1849.

"Stones of Venice," 1851–1853.

These studies in art and nature, written in a fascinating style, opened new forgotten worlds of joy to

the public, and of course the public liked them. But it was not to like the sequel so well. Already, in the last volume of "Modern Painters," we find a new tone of sadness and disappointment. Ruskin felt that people, while applauding the beauty of his language, had not really been stirred to any true appreciation of Turner, and other broader matters were distressing him. Another revolutionary movement had passed over Europe in 1848; it had touched England but lightly, yet it had awakened men even there to a fresh sense of the wretchedness of the poor. Ruskin, in his own line, had been trying to revive the arts in England. He found, through experiments in art education and art production, that workmen were so made into machines, and kept so constantly anxious about bread and butter and rent, by modern industrial conditions, that it was hopeless to look to them for any creative power such as had been practically universal in the middle ages. This discovery led him to scrutinize more widely the conditions of modern life. He became filled with profound sorrow and dissatisfaction. He could not increase the pleasure of the classes that live daintily, by writing about art any longer, while the myriads were starving in soul as well as in body. So it came to pass that the high priest of beauty turned social reformer.

The transition.

In 1860 Ruskin published in the *Cornhill Magazine* the successive chapters of his book "Unto This Last." It was a passionate, but for the most part sternly reasoned, arraignment of the injustice of the modern industrial system. It treated the technical problems of economics in a literary manner; that is,

Work as critic of society.

"Unto This Last," 1860.

it showed their concrete human significance and brought them within the range of sympathy. The public was amazed and angered by the audacious originality of the thought. Thackeray, the editor, dared not continue the series, and it closed abruptly.

Nothing daunted by this reception, Ruskin continued for the rest of his life to present to an irate and mocking public his ideas of the true principles whereon a righteous state must rest. People begged him to go on with art criticism. "You must get your country clean and your people lovely," he retorted, "before you can have any true art at all." The filth and hideousness of modern English cities pointed his application. Now he wrote for the privileged classes, trying to rouse them to their responsibilities; now he addressed himself to working-men.

Fors Clavigera, 1870–1878. *Fors Clavigera*, a monthly publication to which he devoted much energy in his later years, is a rich treasure-house of his teaching. It would be an unusual working-man who would care for this beautiful medley, but for an educated reader it is full of charm and suggestion.

Ruskin's versatile powers did not confine themselves, however, to one line. He reverted often to his early interests, and treated them in the light of his new convictions. In 1870 he was appointed Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford, and he devoted himself most earnestly to his duties as he conceived them.

Later life. His "Inaugural Oxford Lectures" seemed to himself one of his most important works. He did much to quicken social passion as well as artistic feeling among the young sons of privilege at the University. The university settlement movement, among other

things, owes its first impetus to his teaching. But at last the continued scorn and indifference of the public to truths he believed vital, proved too great a strain. Ruskin became a victim to successive attacks of mental malady, and his faculties slipped at last into a state of gentle decay. In 1900 his weary spirit found release; he had given away his large fortune, inherited and made by his books, but he retained a lovely home, Brantwood, in the Lake country, and here the last years of his life were peacefully spent.

Death, 1900.

Ruskin's art criticism has led the way to a further development which has in some respects superseded his own work; his social writings, at first discredited, are exerting a more and more potent influence in our generation. His great principle, "There is no wealth but life," is transforming our political economy. In pursuance of this principle, Ruskin pleads that we should be Christians just as much when we are buying clothes or hiring workmen as when we are saying our prayers. This principle sounds simple, but the world does not like to admit it, and if admitted it carries us a long way, — quite outside the pale of the present social and industrial order. Ruskin's treatment of the ethics of consumption and production is searching and audacious indeed.

Ruskin's social ideas.

Like his master, Carlyle, Ruskin never accepted evolutionary thought. Like Carlyle, also, he had a horror of democracy, which as he saw it meant a state of things where each individual was free to grab all he could get. His ideal social state, which he sought, vainly, to realize through his experiment in St. George's Guild, was a sort of socialism com-

bined with rigid class distinctions. But whatever limitations or mistakes may seem to us to inhere in Ruskin's social teaching, we must revere in him one of the noblest and the most heroic spirits of the English race; and we may brood long over one sentence, which may be said to sum up the convictions of his life, "Life without industry is guilt; industry without art is brutality."

V. Matthew Arnold

1822–1888. Matthew Arnold, like Ruskin and Newman, was an Oxford man; he was three years younger than Ruskin. His father, Thomas Arnold, was the famous headmaster of Rugby, one of the greatest of English educators, a man of fine intellect, a liberal Christian after the school of Coleridge.

Parentage and early life. The serene influences of Wordsworth were upon Matthew Arnold's early life, for his family lived much at Fox How, near the home of the old poet. After his Rugby days, which he shared with his friend Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold went to Oxford. The power of Newman was at its height, but his father's mode of thought preserved him from its attractions. The University, however, put its stamp upon him: he is the most academic of our essayists.

Matthew Arnold was born a poet, and his poetry we shall discuss in another chapter. It belongs to his youth, for the cares of practical life soon submerged him. He held the laborious position of Inspector of Schools, and toiled at his task indefatigably. But Arnold's energy and efficiency were great, and his working standard high. He was by

nature critic as well as poet, and he produced a considerable volume of criticism perhaps finer in quality than anything that England had possessed.

Literary criticism.

Carlyle had lifted criticism from the spirit of carping and prejudice that disfigures the early reviews; he had treated such subjects as appealed to him with reverence and sympathy. Arnold lifted it higher yet, for he added to sympathy, discrimination, and a delicate power of psychological analysis. His "Lectures on Translating Homer," his "Essays in Criticism," his "Celtic Literature," comprise his literary criticism; and they are the best things of their kind that England possesses, though much good criticism has been produced since his day. He chose his subjects, with no insular prejudice, from various non-English countries, with a preference for France; he treated them with a breadth that always deduced something of wide general interest from the subject in hand, yet with a fineness that interpreted the subtle phases of personality. Arnold believed that the special function of modern life was rather critical than creative; that we should get clearer ideas of the value and relations of the treasures we have, before we tried to advance into new regions. He also believed that criticism itself, if sensitive and intelligent enough, might be a kind of creation, and his own work goes far to prove his claim.

"On Translating Homer," 1861.

"Essays in Criticism," 1865, 1888.

"The Study of Celtic Literature," 1867.

Religious criticism.

Arnold was more than a critic of literature; he was a critic of life. Religious and social conditions found in him more scathing analysis than in any other modern thinker. His chief book of social criticism is called "Culture and Anarchy"; his more important writings on religious subjects are "God

"St. Paul and Protestantism," 1870.

"Literature and Dogma," 1873.

and the Bible," "Literature and Dogma," and "St. Paul and Protestantism."

"God and the Bible," 1875.

These last books were perhaps the most talked of in Arnold's lifetime, but he is not at his best in them. His fundamental assumption is that faith in supernatural Christianity is dead; he seeks to find a substitute in "morality touched by emotion," as he defines religion, and he tries to prove that the eternal value of the Bible is intact, though the belief in a personal God be abandoned. This seems a somewhat paradoxical attempt. Still, there is much that is beautiful and helpful in Arnold's religious criticism, and we must not forget, though we are sometimes tempted to by his manner, that his real aim was always reverent, and that he wished to further the life of the spirit, not to hinder it.

Social criticism.

"Culture and Anarchy," 1869.

"Mixed Essays," 1879.

Arnold's social criticism is interesting and significant. He is not an emotional writer, like Carlyle and Ruskin. Cool intellect is to the fore with him, and he habitually writes in a quiet, lightly ironical manner, quite different from their method of eloquent appeal. Nor is he moved, as they are, by the condition of the working classes. But neither Carlyle nor Ruskin is more deeply dissatisfied with his own time than is Arnold. They castigated our moral defects, he dissects our intellectual weakness. Not lack of justice, but lack of culture, in society, touches him most profoundly; by culture he means the harmonious understanding of life which is potent to make reason and the will of God prevail. Till men get more of this quality, he thinks that they would better let reforms alone. The class with which he came most in contact was the middle

class, dominant in an industrial democracy; and his attacks on the stupidity and prejudices of this class — attacks which we may all take to ourselves — are not only sound, they are highly entertaining.

Arnold did not distrust democracy, as Carlyle and Ruskin did. He belonged in thought to a younger generation, and he knew that it was inevitable. Aristocracies were, he saw, for epochs of concentration, not for epochs of expansion like ours; their day was over. But he felt as strongly as his predecessors the grave dangers that beset democracy as it is; dangers of materialism, of selfish *laisser-faire*. He believed that unless we succeed in spiritualizing the democracy, we shall all make shipwreck; and he thought that culture was the best means to do this, because it lifted us above our ordinary selves to our best selves, and showed us the image of a right society. He emphasized as much as Carlyle or Ruskin the idea of authority, and he believed, as they did, in an extension of the powers of the State.

Arnold's style.

Some people like Arnold's style very much; others find it patronizing, flippant, and at times a little smart. It is always clever and graceful, and when he allows himself to be serious it is at times noble. He does not admit many figures, and he does not attempt the cadence of poetry; but his prose has a purity of movement all its own. It has one peculiarity, the constant use of felicitous phrases to sum up an idea, phrases which Arnold repeats like a motif in music. Often these phrases are borrowed from some one else, sometimes he invents them; but many of them have become almost proverbial from familiarity. Such are "sweetness and light," "sweet reasonable-

ness," the definitions of English classes as "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace," the famous statement that "our inequality materializes our upper class, vulgarizes our middle class, brutalizes our lower class;" the definition of religion already given, and the definition of God as "a stream of tendency not ourselves that makes for righteousness." Arnold's style appears to be easy and loosely woven, even colloquial at times; but when one watches, one finds him to be perhaps more severely logical in the development of thought than any other modern essayist. It is the style of a keen thinker who is also a man of the world, and who might be a poet if he would let himself.

VI. Later Essayists

We have left ourselves no space in which to speak of the later Victorian essay; it is as well, for this essay is quite too near for us to judge. Two names stand out with peculiar clearness during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century; the names of Walter Pater and William Morris. They were both Oxford men, but of most different destinies. Pater, all his life long a recluse in the University, sought refuge and peace in an æsthetic philosophy; he produced essays critical in scholarship and exquisitely fastidious in style, and one remarkable historical romance, "Marius the Epicurean," all sedulously remote from the din and stress of our modern conflict. Morris, equally antagonistic by nature to modern conditions, was yet driven by imperious inward stress on the same path Ruskin had followed,

Walter Pater, 1839–1895.

"Marius the Epicurean," 1885.

William Morris, 1834–1896.

"A Dream of John Ball," 1888.

"News from Nowhere," 1890.

only farther, away from art to the active propaganda of socialism; he produced, as his finest prose work, essays instinct with modern social passion, and two beautiful romances that pulsate with the hopes of a new day. Other essayists, critics of literature and life, have obtained excellence if not eminence. But the four whom we have treated tower above all others, with only Pater and Morris visible at their side.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Macaulay, Life, by TREVELYAN; by COTTER MORISON (English Men of Letters). Essay, by BAGEHOT, Literary Studies. Carlyle, Life, by FROUDE; GARNETT (Great Writers Series); NICHOL (E. M. L.). Letters and Reminiscences, ed. by C. E. NORTON, Essays by LOWELL, MORLEY, STEPHEN (Dictionary of National Biography). Newman, Life, by HUTTON; Apologia pro Vita Sua. The Oxford Movement, DEAN CHURCH. Selections, ed. by LEWIS GATES. Ruskin, Life, by COLLINGWOOD; Præterita (his fragmentary but charming autobiography). Mrs. RITCHIE, Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning. Essays, WALDSTEIN, The Work of John Ruskin. V. D. SCUDDER, Introduction to the Writings of John Ruskin. HOBSON, John Ruskin, Social Reformer (an admirable book). Mrs. MEYNELL, John Ruskin. Arnold, Letters, ed. by G. W. E. RUSSELL; Life, by SAINTSBURY. Essays, GATES, Introduction to Selections. WHIPPLE, Recollections of Eminent Men. General references, BAYNE, Lessons from My Masters, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold. SCUDDER, Social Ideals in English Letters, Part II.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

As we approach our own times, no two teachers will agree in interpretation or emphasis. Moreover, the selections made must depend wholly on the age and character of a class. Young students, for instance, would better approach Carlyle through "Heroes and Hero-Worship." "Sartor Resartus" is far more stimulating for those a little more mature. In carefully chosen extracts from the "French Revolution" and "Past and Present," Book II, all students can be trained to appreciate Carlyle's narrative and descriptive power and the peculiarities of his

style. Selections from Newman, such as are given by Gates, or passages from the "Idea of a University," serve to point the always useful contrast between classical and romantic styles. The more emotional portions of Newman's work cannot be appreciated by the immature.

Much in Ruskin's early writings and in his charming minor books, such as "Sésame and Lilies" and the "Ethics of the Dust" can be enjoyed early. Selections illustrating his word painting, his interpretation of nature and art, his simpler ethical teaching are arranged in order in Scudder's "Introduction to the Writings of John Ruskin." It is also pleasant and useful to study in the concrete, by means of photographs, Ruskin's interpretation of art in pictures. The whole series of frescoes in the Spanish Chapel at Florence, for instance, can be secured, and studied with the help of the delightful little volume, "Mornings in Florence." Ruskin's method in art criticism should be criticised as well as expounded by the teacher, in the light of methods more recent.

In Arnold, the "Essay on Celtic Literature," especially the latter portion, can be made to serve as a sort of review of the whole sweep of English literature, the class being encouraged to trace the three great racial elements in their interplay through the more important books that have been read together. Such of the critical essays of Carlyle and Arnold as treat of authors familiar to the class should be read.

But care must be taken in this period not to force young minds beyond the point of perception natural to them, by any attempt to present comprehensive analysis of authors who will give stimulus and inspiration all along the pathway of life.

TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Biographical lectures would here be in order, interesting the class in the personality of each of these great men. Ample material for a talk, sure to be enjoyed, on the Childhood of Some Great Men, is offered by Carlyle's "Reminiscences" and "Sartor Resartus," Ruskin's "Præterita," Newman's "Apologia," and Hughes's "Tom Brown at Rugby." (The latter gives a vivid picture of the conditions surrounding the childhood of Arnold and Clough.) Also: Criticism, from Jeffrey to Arnold; Why do Artists turn Reformers? (illustrated by Ruskin and Morris).

CHAPTER VIII

VICTORIAN POETRY

THE early work of Tennyson and Browning struck an entirely new note. Tennyson's fairy fineness of phrase obviously, indeed, owed much to Keats, while "Pauline" was the work of an avowed disciple of Shelley; but there was a delicate conscious artistry in this work of Tennyson, different from the spontaneous onrush of music in his predecessors, while Browning in "Pauline" valiantly assayed a new art-form, the dramatic monologue, and showed a new absorption in the scenery of an individual mind other than his own.

These two greatest of the Victorian poets, as they began first, continued longest in the field. During their prolonged careers, two minor schools of poetry rose and fell. Let us glance at these before we turn to the masters.

I. Minor Schools

1. Poet Doubt.

Matth Arnold 1822–1

The spiritual wistfulness of the Victorian age found searching and melodious expression in the work of Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hugh Clough. We have already spoken of Arnold's prose. The poetry of his youth gives us the clew to that underwoof of feeling of which a sensitive reader is conscious through all the persiflage and argument of

his later years. Not that his poetry is impassioned; it is strictly self-controlled, and thrills us chiefly through its exquisite reserve. But it is full of the melancholy sense of spiritual incertitudes; we feel in it the expression of a soul —

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born."

An elegiac strain pervades it; and indeed the best and most finished work in this highly wrought verse is the avowedly elegiac poems. Arnold's theory of poetry was that it should deal with noble action, should draw its themes from the heroic past, should be universal in its appeal. He tried these theories occasionally, and the result, "Sohrab and Rustum," "Balder Dead," is fine but a little cold. But as a rule he disregarded his theory, and he has given us poetry which, in its rendering of those subtle emotions that spring from the life of thought, could never have been written before the nineteenth century, and appealed only to the few in its own age. For these few, however, its charm is compelling, and shows no trace of lessening as the years go on. A lofty self-dependence, resignation, courage, — this is, after all his spiritual striving, the mood in which Arnold seeks to rest.

"Poems," 1855.

"Merope," 1858.

Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819–1861.

Arthur Hugh Clough, the friend of Arnold, was of a more robust genius. His training and tradition, at school and University, were the same as Arnold's, but we seem to feel in him a more direct relation to the life of action as well as to the life of thought. He was intensely interested in the social problems that were coming to the fore in '48, as well as in the

religious questions that affected his own soul; his long narrative poems, "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich," "Amours de Voyage," "Mari Magno," show this double interest, and his most characteristic poem, "Dipsychus," a sort of latter-day Faust, is full of both. Still, the most important thing in his consciousness is man's relation to unseen realities. Like Arnold, he was powerfully drawn to Christianity, yet smitten by doubt concerning it, and the poems which express this mood, like "Easter Day," and "The New Sinai," express with less delicate finish than Arnold, but with a poignant sincerity, his sense of loss, his hope, his spiritual courage. Clough died at Florence in 1861. Like many modern men touched with the Hamlet-temper, we feel that his nature never found full utterance. But few truer notes than his have been struck in the poetry of the century.

"The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich," 1848.

"Ambarvalia," 1849.

"Dipsychus," 1862.

"Oh not unowned, Thou shalt unnamed forgive,"

he cries. His refuge is not, like Arnold's, in self-dependence, but in faith that clings to a Truth unseen.

Questions concerning religious creeds did not distress the second school of minor Victorian poets. We may call them the poets of art, as we called Arnold and Clough the poets of doubt. The eldest, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, is the greatest name; the others of the group are Algernon Charles Swinburne, and William Morris.

2. Poets of Art.

It shows the tendency of this group that two of them, Rossetti and Morris, were not only poets but artists. They were closely associated in friendship, moreover, with certain painters, notably Millais, Hol-

General tendency

man Hunt, and Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who have largely helped the renaissance of beauty in England. All these men carried further the movement toward beauty which Ruskin had begun, and on lines that he approved. They are often called Preraphaelites because they drew inspiration from the religious feeling and the effort after minute truthfulness to nature, of the Italian painters who precede Raphael. All of them, to use a phrase dear to their school, believe that life might be "made perfect by the love of visible beauty"; and the habit of thinking in pictures, so that the most passionate emotion immediately passes into the concrete symbol, is the distinguishing mark of their poetry. In a way they derive from Keats, but there is a subconsciousness of sordid modern life in their work which we do not find in his. They force their way violently into that world of dreams wherein he was tranquilly born. One of them at least, Morris, could not stay there, but was drawn forth by the voices of the world's sorrow to join the socialist propaganda; a thing which we cannot imagine happening to Keats.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828–1882.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born of Italian parents, settled in London. We are constantly reminded in reading him that he is really an Italian writing in English. Italian influence had been slight in England since the time of the later Renaissance. The Victorian age opened a sensitive surface to almost every influence from abroad; and, among others, Italy affected it, through Rossetti and the Brownings.

The instinct to paint was stronger than that to write in Rossetti. In 1848, he started, with other

young men, the Preraphaelite Brotherhood of artists. It was the revolutionary year; Clough's "Amours de Voyage," Carlyle's "Latter Day Pamphlets," Kingsley's "Alton Locke," the Christian socialist movement started by Kingsley and Frederick Denison Maurice, and Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" were to express part of the feeling it generated in England. But the fate of the people did not interest these young men, who withdrew themselves into an ideal world of poetry, beauty, and feeling. In their significant little organ, the *Germ*, appeared some of the loveliest of the early verse of Rossetti, including the "Blessed Damozel." But he seems to have thought lightly of his verse in comparison with his painting, and he continued to be chiefly an artist. His poetry, however, produced from time to time and privately circulated, came to exert a strong influence in certain circles. His charming translations of Dante's "Vita Nuova," and of other early Italian poetry, helped to make him better known. Finally, in 1870, and again in 1881, volumes of his poems appeared. They gave in words the emotions of his paintings. Many of them were of strange and singular beauty: ballad poems, numerous lyrics, and a series of love sonnets called "The House of Life," which have taken their place in our many sonnet-cycles, beside Shakespeare's sonnets and Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

"The Early Italian Poets," 1861.

"Poems," 1870.

"Ballads and Sonnets," 1881.

Romanticism, from which English fiction was at this time straining away, holds full sway once more in the work of Rossetti. Beauty touched with strangeness exactly describes its charm. His poetry is charged with the sense of mystery, natural and

spiritual; far from wishing to penetrate the truth which the mystery hides, as Arnold does, and Clough, he exults in the mystery itself. He is not truly spiritual, and, needless to say, he has no large vision of the actual world; but all he writes is full of a passion that is serious and very pure, and to express this passion he finds again and again some strange, haunting, inevitable phrase.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837.

In some ways, no English poet has ever had a finer endowment than Algernon Charles Swinburne. He is past master of versification and melody. Unfortunately, his verse has not sufficient intellectual or moral substance to correspond to its marvellous form. His poetry is full of enthusiasm, indeed, for political freedom, but Odes to Liberty, which were genuine in Shelley's day, sound like an academic echo in days that have learned how little political liberty means taken by itself. The senses have too large a part in the inspiration of Swinburne; the world of thought seems far away, and the world of spiritual vision is quite unguessed. He is at his best, and it is a splendid best, when writing of Nature, especially of the sea. Besides a marvellous wealth of lyrics, Swinburne has produced, among other things, a group of long dramas. They are fine in their way, but destitute of humor and of wide and varied power in character delineation. His two Greek plays, "Atalanta in Calydon," and "Erectheus," although early work, are as beautiful as anything he has written, and contain choruses supreme in lyrical modulations. Swinburne's most interesting mood is one of violent rebellion, hatred of Christianity with its doctrine of suffering, exaltation of untrammelled humanity as the lord of creation: —

"Rosamund," 1861.

"Atalanta in Calydon," 1864.

"Chastelard," 1865.

"Poems and Ballads," 1866-1889.

"Songs before Sunrise," 1871.

"Songs of the Springtide," 1880.

"Tristram of Lyonesse," 1882.

"Glory to man in the highest: for man is the master of things." "Rosamund," 1900.

But this vehement agnosticism, though magnificently expressed at times, has as he words it too little philosophical basis to be really great. Swinburne has, however, fine positive enthusiasms, as shown not only in his verse, but in his copious critical prose, which lacks balance and discrimination, but evinces an enviable power of admiration.

William Morris, who became during his later life a great force in England, revived for us through his delightful work in verse many of the imaginative pleasures of the past. He most clearly shows the tendency of this school of poets to revert to earlier and simpler times for that rest and beauty which the modern world does not furnish. "The Earthly Paradise" is a collection of tales admirably told, drawn now from classic stores, now from mediæval lore, and recalling by the studied grace of handling the manner of the early Renaissance. "The Defence of Guinevere," Morris's earliest volume, holds a series of Arthurian studies. "Jason" is a fine version of the familiar classic story; while "Sigurd the Volsung," Morris's noblest work in verse, is a glorious retelling of the old hero-saga, and the finest result yet of the enthusiasm for the wild myths of our Celtic and Germanic forefathers. Only a part of Morris's wonderful versatility went into poetry: —

William Morris, 1834–1896.

"The Defence of Guenevere," 1858.

"Life and Death of Jason," 1867.

"The Earthly Paradise," 1868–1870.

"Sigurd the Volsung," 1870.

"When the gods asked him for one deed, he ever gave them twain,"

as he says of his Sigurd. After he turned socialist, a few lyrics were all that he produced in verse; but his prose romances are the work of a true poet.

II. Alfred Tennyson

1809–1892. We turn to the masters; and we see that in quantity of work and in breadth of scope, no less than in quality, they show natures richer and larger than those of the other modern poets. Tennyson does not appeal perhaps to any individual temperament so strongly as Arnold appeals to one, Rossetti to another; but in the sensitiveness and varied range of his tranquil work, no less than in his artistic perfection, we recognize that he is the representative English poet of the Victorian age. His whole career befits the poet of an epoch of peace, of constitutional progress, of scientific advance; and it was in this aspect that the Victorian age appeared to Tennyson. There was, to be sure, another aspect; this, in his singularly sheltered life, he never adequately realized.

Life. Alfred Tennyson was the son of a clergyman; he was educated at Cambridge, and always cherished the memory of his college days. He won recognition early, but was not pressed into too hasty work. His life, unstirred by unusual incidents, but marked by high converse with the leading men of his time, was spent in fair and quiet places. Queen Victoria loved the man and his poetry, and after the death of Wordsworth, in 1850, the laurel was placed, unquestioned, on his brow. In this year he married. His honored years led to a quiet death.

Work. The volume of 1830 was one of delicate preludings.

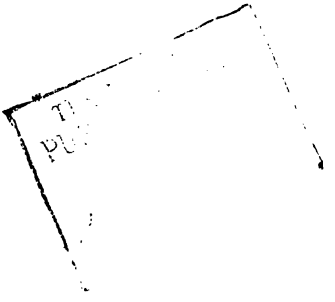


ALFRED TENNYSON

1809-1892

After the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.





In that of 1833 were many of the poems still dearest to the public, including "The Lady of Shalott," "A Dream of Fair Women," "The Palace of Art," "The Two Voices." For the next ten years he published nothing, but revised with exquisite care what he had already written and wrote new poems slowly and quietly as inspiration came. In 1842 a volume of revised selections from his earlier work appeared, and also a new volume, which revealed the full power of his art. This is the volume of the "Morte d'Arthur," earliest member of those blank verse transcriptions of Arthurian legend which were to constitute the most ambitious work of his life.

"Poems by Two Brothers," 1827.

"Poems," 1830, 1833, 1842.

In 1847 appeared "The Princess," a playfully romantic poem on the woman question. A later edition contained some of Tennyson's most magical work in the form of interspersed lyrics. So far, Tennyson's work had expressed no deep personal experience, though a poem like "The Two Voices" showed a nature sensitive to the spiritual drama of the time. His inspiration had been literary and derived, and his poems had shown perfect workmanship and fine imagination, but not much passion. In 1833, however, an experience had come to him which struck deep. This was the death of his dear friend, the betrothed of his sister, Arthur Hallam. We are glad of this great sorrow, for it has given us one of our great treasures, the crowning expression of the elegiac instinct so strong in the Anglo-Saxon race, — "In Memoriam." Here English elegy escapes at last from the beautiful but conventional setting of classic elegy, used in different ways by Milton, Shelley, and Arnold. It faces Grief directly, till at last in

"The Princess," 1847.

"In Memoriam," 1850.

Grief's eyes it sees reflected the light of an eternal hope. "In Memoriam" is not a poem of spiritual triumph so much as of spiritual search; the search of a modern man, conscious of all the obstacles presented to faith in immortality by the natural order and by philosophic doubt, yet moving to belief that the undying instinct of the heart is witness to a life that cannot die. After long and loving work the poem was published in 1850; it is in more senses than one the central poem of the century to English-speaking men.

"Maud," 1855.

In 1855, appeared "Maud," a monodrama telling a rather morbid story of passion and sorrow. Tennyson's genius was mature, and his work came swiftly now.

"Idylls of the King," 1858–1886.

The "Idylls of the King," on which his mind dwelt for many years, grew gradually on his hands, from a series of separate studies to a complete poem with something like epic unity. They are based on Malory, and nowhere can the changes wrought by the modern spirit be more effectively studied than in Tennyson's handling of his original. The old story had a great moral of its own; Tennyson gives it a new one, to suit the nineteenth century. Some prefer the decorous modern version, some like the passion, truth, and mystery of the wild old tale; but all must agree that narrative blank verse was never handled with more perfect mastery than in the "Idylls of the King."

Other work.

Tennyson wrote a large number of narrative poems, dealing with English life, of which "Enoch Arden" is perhaps the best. In his later years he attempted the drama, and added a group of three patriotic dramas from English history to those Shakespeare

left. But his dramatic work, though dignified, is not a marked success. If he lives he will live supremely as a lyric poet, and the lyrical inspiration was his last as it had been his first.

Tennyson's relation to his age.

Tennyson expresses his age in its more obvious aspects, especially in the enlargement of thought and the social conditions that followed on applied scientific inventions and on the rise of evolutionary theory. His poetry is soaked with scientific terms and ideas; his central faith is in the gradual uplift of the race to a higher and fuller life. He constantly seeks spiritual conviction, but with a keen consciousness all the time of the point of view of the doubter. He was keenly aware of the modern struggle with materialism, and threw all the resources of his art on the side of an idealist philosophy. The social unrest and the social evils of his time, however, he never understood, though they caused him distress and perplexity, especially in his later years; he was never in direct contact with them. He was perfectly content with England as he saw it, with English homes, those "haunts of ancient peace," with English men and English girls; the England known to him was the secluded England of the aristocracy, not Dickens's seething England of the middle class. He seems insular to continental criticism, and his outlook certainly has marked limitations; but his quiet idyls of English life present a picture of which we cannot fail to feel the beauty.

Tennyson's art.

His art is studied and exquisite, lovely in every detail; his poetry is of that literary order, just below the highest, which delights us more by the associations and memories it arouses, than by the

new thought or passion it quickens. His work rarely excites, like that of his predecessors, or like that of his contemporary, Browning; but in our ordinary and habitual moods it satisfies.

III. Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1809-1861. Robert Browning would wish us to place before his own name, the name of his beloved wife, Elizabeth Barrett; and indeed the thought of one of these wedded lovers will always suggest the other. Mrs. Browning is the greatest woman poet of England, though some think the work of Christina Rossetti, narrower in range though it be, more likely to live because of its more sustained art power. Mrs. Browning's poetry is marred by carelessness; her impulsive passion and imagination need the check of judgment. She was an invalid for many years, and her work is that of a woman of naturally wide and intense sympathies shut in upon herself. No one, however, can deny her genius. The soul of melody was in her, as many of her lyrics attest; "Aurora Leigh," her long novel in verse, is a fine expression of the social ferment in the central years of the century; of her personal love poems, the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," one must speak softly, with deep reverence for this throbbing revelation of a beautiful heart, given us in beautiful verse.

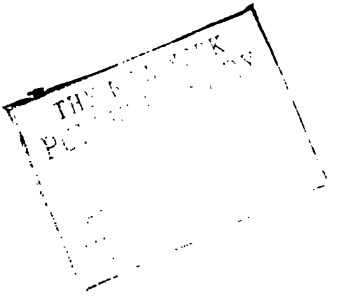
IV. Robert Browning

1812-1889. In Robert Browning we have one of the most paradoxical figures of the Victorian age. Only



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
1809-1861





three years younger than Tennyson, it was his fate to see fame, lavishly bestowed on his brother poet, long elude him. His production was more copious than Tennyson's; but his successive volumes, applauded by the few, were ridiculed by the many as obscure, unintelligible, and out of the true range of art. His spirit was never daunted; and in his old age the tide turned. He lived to see societies established for the interpretation of his work, and to enjoy a popularity almost ludicrous in its suddenness. It is too soon to know what Browning's final place will be; we can at least see that he was not a poet to express, like Tennyson, the common consciousness of the educated classes. He expressed, as no one else has done, some of the more occult forces at work beneath the surface of modern life, and so, in the fulness of time, he became, not only an exponent, but a leader.

His reputation.

Browning's life had practically no events, except his marriage with Miss Barrett. He was a Londoner, with no university education. "Italy was my university," he said. He had comfortable means, so that he could devote his life to literature. In 1845 he met Miss Barrett, an invalid confined to her room; he persuaded the frail shadowlike woman to marry him, — secretly, for fear of family opposition, — and to fly with him to the Continent. There, in Florence mainly, they led an enchanted life, till her death in 1861. After that the surviving poet, taking his sorrow bravely, as befitted the author of poems vibrating with faith in immortality, lived, now in London, now in Italy, though not in Florence, till, in 1889, he died in Venice.

Life.

Work.

Browning's first work showed the sweep of his power. He began, not with short lyrics, but with three long poems, "Pauline," "Paracelsus," and "Sordello." The first two were practically dramatic monologues, though "Paracelsus" was nominally a drama. "Sordello" was a long narrative poem, excessively obscure, though full of beautiful detail. In all these poems, Browning is profoundly influenced by Shelley. The series of "Bells and Pomegranates" followed, and it showed the essentially dramatic turn of his genius for it included the great group of dramas, "Pippa Passes," "The Return of the Druses," "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon," "Colombe's Birthday," "Luria," "A Soul's Tragedy," and others. But if his genius was dramatic, it was not so in the sense that the Shakespeareans were dramatic. Browning liked to get into another consciousness, but he did not like to do this for a great many people at once; his interest centred in individuals. He found his true art form in the brief dramatic monologue. Such monologues were the best and largest element in the two collections, "Men and Women" and "Dramatis Personæ." These collections contain the best loved of Browning's work, and remarkable they are. Poetry has here come down from the heights to the cities; it moves among men, close to their business and bosoms, at home with any nationality or period, Hebrew, Greek, French, Italian, English. It seeks to penetrate men's secrets, to note their motives, those "seeds of act, God holds appraising in His hollow palm." In closeness of condensed portraiture, the Victorian age has no greater work than this. The non-dramatic or slightly dramatic

"Pauline," 1833.

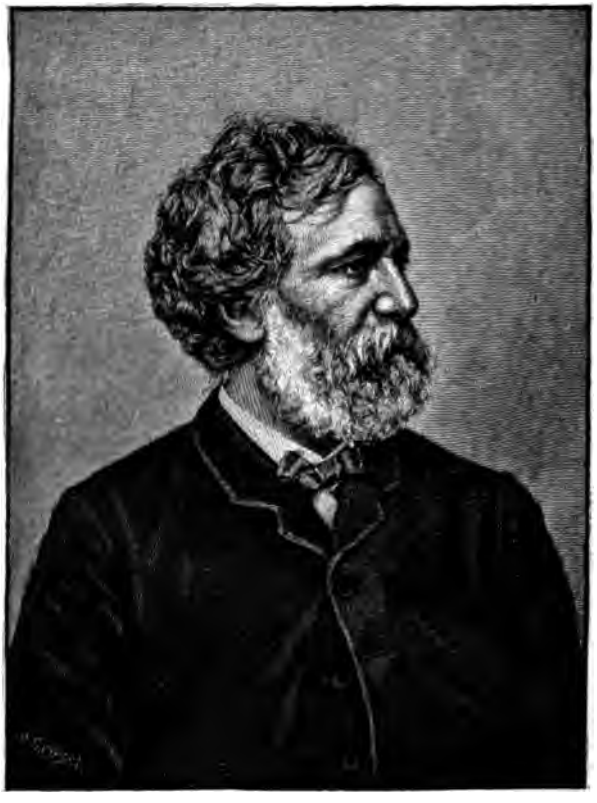
"Paracelsus," 1835.

"Sordello," 1840.

Dramas, 1837–1846.

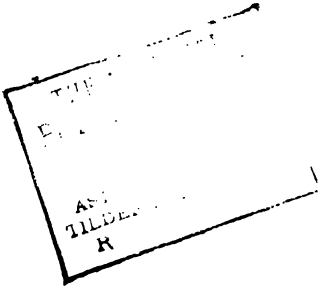
"Men and Women," 1855.

"Dramatis Personæ," 1869.



ROBERT BROWNING
1812-1889





poems of this period, like "Saul," "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and "Abt Vogler," are the most positive expressions of spiritual faith that Victorian poetry has reached.

"The Ring and the Book," 1868.

Browning's masterpiece is "The Ring and the Book." It is our modern English epic; we have travelled far indeed from the days of Beowulf. The poem combines in a way the advantages of epic and drama, for it is a series of dramatic monologues, telling the same story from different points of view. This story is the record of an obscure murder case of the late seventeenth century in Rome which Browning found in a yellow parchment book. Out of this unpromising material Browning has evolved a marvellous study of sin, purity, and struggle, shown not only as they affect the main actors, but as they serve as touchstones to reveal the character of the bystanders and critics. To one who cares only for the story, "The Ring and the Book" is insufferably tedious; to one who cares for events as they create and display character, it is an illuminating poem. It sounds depths of vileness and iniquity, but the study of the woman-child Pompilia and of the wise old Pope Innocent are the fullest expression of the power of the spiritual to transform the natural that Victorian poetry possesses.

Later work.

Poems of casuistry. 1871-1876.

"La Saisiaz," 1878.

After "The Ring and the Book," Browning's genius passed into another phase. He indulged his keen intellect by the creation of a series of paradoxical poems of casuistry, "Fifine at the Fair," "Aristophanes' Apology," "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau," etc. These poems are stimulating, but imagination and beauty seem a little far away, as indeed they do

"Dramatic Idyls," etc., 1879–1880.

in much of Browning's later work. The lyrics of his later life, and of his very last volume, show, however, that the old fire had not abated, and that the old faith still burned clear.

"Asolando," 1889.

Browning's spirit.

Anything that expresses life, however grotesque and ugly it be, seemed to Browning fit subject for art. His quest, like that of many modern artists, was less for the beautiful than for the significant. Life, moreover, seemed to him something not finished, but in the making. His poetry thrills with the sense of development through struggle, of the glory of the imperfect. It is splendidly militant. "All to the very end is trial in life;" and he delights to show us the crises of trial, wherein the destiny of souls is decided. He chants no pensive elegies over the prevalence of doubt; he voices exultation in a faith all the stronger because won out of the shadows.

> "You call for faith,
> I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.
> The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say,
> If faith o'ercomes doubt." [1]

Browning strikes the most triumphant note of the Victorian period: his creed is Christian, and his interpretation of life is pervaded by his Christianity.

V. Conclusion

Victorian poetry dealt, not like that of the preceding age, with Nature and humanity, but with humanity alone. It penetrated the heart and soul of man, and feared nothing that it should find there. It saw few visions; the mark of search was on it, as on all

[1] "Bishop Blougram's Apology."

the literature of the modern world. For the literature of the nineteenth century was one, not of exultant discovery like that of the Renaissance, not of placid formulæ, like that of the eighteenth century, but of experiment and doubt. It was marked, more than the literature of any other age, by a profound discontent, by a sense of the unity with which the destiny of the whole race is bound together, by an eager pressing toward the future. It yearned toward a nobler society, toward a clearer vision of spiritual truth. Like the last group of prophets painted by Sargent in the Boston Public Library, the faces of the men of imagination and vision in the last century were turned longingly to the East. The good queen, who gave her high prophetic name to one of the great eras of literature, passed away in the fulness of her years — beloved of all the world. The nineteenth century and the Victorian age went out together. We leave the great literature of the English race, with new horizons opening around it, new questions forming on its lips. What answer will the literature of the twentieth century bring? What fair, unknown countries will it explore? We cannot tell; we watch, and wait, and trust the future.

REFERENCE BOOKS

STEDMAN, Victorian Poets. WALKER, The Age of Tennyson. OLIPHANT, Victorian Age of English Literature. SCUDDER, The Life of the Spirit in the Modern English Poets.

Essay on Arnold as a Poet, R. H. HUTTON (Literary Essays). Essay on Clough, BAGEHOT (Literary Studies). Life of Rossetti, KNIGHT (Great Writers Series). SHARP, D. G. Rossetti. WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI, D. G. Rossetti, as Designer and Writer. Morris, Life, by MACKAIL (2 vols.), one of the best and most absorbing of modern biographies.

Tennyson, Life, by his Son (2 vols.). S. A. BROOKE, Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life. VAN DYKE, The Poetry of Tennyson. WAUGH, Lord Tennyson. Essays by DOWDEN, F. W. MYERS, HUTTON. MRS. RITCHIE, Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning. Article, by AINGER, Dictionary of National Biography.

Browning, Life, by MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR (2 vols). SHARP (Great Writers Series), Browning Society Papers; Papers of the Boston Browning Society. Handbook, MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR. Introduction to the Study of Browning, ARTHUR SYMONS. Introduction, CORSON. BERDOE, The Browning Cyclopædia. Essays by BAGEHOT, HUTTON, J. J. CHAPMAN (Emerson and Other Essays).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS-WORK

The young student would best study short chosen poems, as Arnold's "Forsaken Merman," "Balder," "Sohrab and Rustum"; Rossetti's "King's Tragedy" and "White Ship"; stories from Morris's "Earthly Paradise"; the "Idylls of the King," "Enoch Arden," the "Princess," short lyrics, from Tennyson; the "Flight of the Duchess," "Hervé Riel," "Andrea del Sarto," "Abt Vogler," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," from Browning. Each one may be dwelt on by itself, and the temperament and art of the poets should become familiar. It is also possible to make certain modern poems the occasion of a review. Morris's "Sigurd the Volsung" may thus be compared with "Beowulf" and the Volsung Saga; Rossetti's "Ballads" with genuine old Ballads; "The Idylls of the King" with Malory. In more advanced classes it is valuable to do with one poem,—as, for instance, "In Memoriam,"—all that can be done. Study it in itself, for beauty, structure, thought movement, etc. Relate it to the other work of the author. Relate the poem, and incidentally the author's other work, to the general products and tendencies of his time. Broaden out and compare this poem with poems of similar motif or subject in all the earlier periods of our literature.

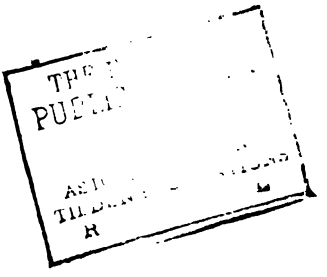
TALKS FROM THE TEACHER

Here, again, biographical talks are the most valuable. The Preraphaelite Movement in Art, illustrated by photographs; How Science is Affecting Poetry; The Spiritual Outlook of the Modern Poets.



THOMAS HOOD
1798-1845





THE VICTORIAN WRITERS, 1830–1900

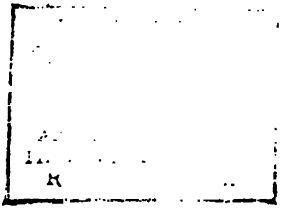
Poets and Writers of Verse	Novelists and Writers of Fiction	Essayists, Historians, Etc.	Events in English History, Etc.
Bryan Waller Procter, 1787–1874. (Barry Cornwall).	Lord Bulwer Lytton, 1805–1873.	**Thomas Babington Macaulay**, 1800–1859. (historian, essayist, writer of verse).	Reform Bill passed, 1832.
Robert Browning, 1812–1889.	**Charles Dickens**, 1812–1870.	**Thomas Carlyle**, 1795–1881. (essayist, historian, social reformer).	Beginning of the High Church ("tractarian") movement, 1833.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809–1861.	Benjamin Disraeli, 1804–1881. (statesman).	Harriet Martineau, 1802–1876. (economist, historian).	Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834.
Hartley Coleridge, 1796–1849.	Frederick Marryat, 1792–1848.	**John Henry Newman**, 1801–1890. (theologian, novelist, poet).	Municipal Reform Act, 1835.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1809–1892.	**William Makepeace Thackeray**, 1811–1863. (essayist, writer of verse, caricaturist).	Edward Bouverie Pusey, (theologian). 1800–1882.	Victoria, 1837–1901.
Martin Farquhar Tupper, 1810–1889.	Charles Lever, 1809–1872.	Henry Hart Milman, 1791–1868. (historian, writer of verse).	Anti-Corn Law League, 1838.
Eliza Cook, 1818–1889.	Charlotte Brontë, 1816–1855. (writer of verse).	Agnes Strickland, 1806–1874. (historian).	Marriage of the Queen, 1840.
Thomas Hood, 1798–1845.	Emily Brontë, 1818–1848. (writer of verse).	Thomas Arnold, 1795–1842. (educator).	Penny Post, 1840.
Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819–1861.	Anne Brontë, 1819–1849. (writer of verse).	**Charles Robert Darwin**, 1809–1882. (naturalist, philosopher, evolutionist).	Free Trade agitation under Cobden, 1841.
William Edmondstoune Aytoun, 1813–1865.	**George Eliot** (Marian Evans), 1820–1881. (translator, editor, essayist, writer of verse).	John Frederick Denison Maurice, 1805–1872. (theologian, Christian socialist).	*Punch* estab., 1841.
Adelaide Ann Procter, 1825–1864.	Anthony Trollope, 1815–1882.	**John Stuart Mill**, 1806–1873. (philosopher, economist, logician).	Bank Charter Act, 1844.
William Morris, 1834–1896. (translator, writer of romances, social reformer).	Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810–1866.		J. H. Newman leaves the Church of England, 1845.
Edward Fitzgerald, 1809–1883. (translator of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam).	Charles Kingsley, 1819–1875. (dramatist, writer of verse, social reformer).		Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, 1846.
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (artist). 1828–1882.	William Wilkie Collins, 1824–1889.		Repeal of the Corn Laws, 1846.
	Charles Reade, 1814–1884.		Chartist Riots, 1848.
			The Germ, a pre-Raphaelite periodical edited by Rossetti and others, 1850.
			Crimean War, 1854.
			Fall of Sebastopol, 1855.
			Peace of Paris, 1856.
			Indian Mutiny, 1857.

THE VICTORIAN WRITERS — *Continued*

Poets and Writers of Verse	Novelists and Writers of Fiction	Essayists, Historians, Etc.	Events in English History, Etc.
Algernon Charles Swinburne, (critic). 1837–1909.	Charlotte Mary Yonge, 1823–1901.	John Ruskin, 1819–1900. (art critic, essayist, economist, social reformer).	
Christina Rossetti, 1830–1894.	Dinah Mulock Craik, 1826–1887.	George Henry Lewes, 1817–1878. (biographer, scientist).	
Jean Ingelow, 1820–1897. (writer of novels and stories for children).	Thomas Hughes, 1823–1896.	Leigh Hunt, 1784–1859. (essayist, critic).	Atlantic cables laid, 1858–1866.
Charles Stuart Calverley, 1831–1884.	George Macdonald, (poet). 1824–1905.	John Keble, 1792–1866. (theologian, writer of verse).	Imprisonment for ordinary debtors abolished, 1861.
Lord Lytton, the younger, 1831–1891. (Owen Meredith).	Henry Kingsley, 1830–1876.	Matthew Arnold, 1822–1888. (essayist, critic, poet).	Death of the Prince Consort, 1861.
Lewis Morris, 1834–1907.	George Meredith, 1828–1909. (writer of verse).	James Anthony Froude, 1818–1894. (historian, biographer).	Suez Canal completed, 1869.
Henry Austin Dobson, (essayist). 1840–	Margaret Oliphant, 1828–1897. (biographer, historian).	Anna Jameson, 1797–1860. (writer on art and literature).	Irish Land Act, 1870.
Sir Edwin Arnold, 1832–1904.	C. L. Dodgson, ab. 1833–1898. (Lewis Carroll).	Edward Augustus Freeman, (historian). 1823–1892.	G. F. Watts (p), 1817–1904.
	Richard Doddridge Blackmore, 1825–1900.	Charles Merivale, 1808–1893. (historian).	Sir Edward Burne-Jones (p), 1833–1898.
	William Black, 1841–1898.	Herbert Spencer, 1820–1903. (philosopher).	Disraeli, Prime Minister, 1874.
	Walter Besant, 1838–1901.	John Mason Neale, 1818–1866. (historian, translator of hymns).	J. E. Millais (p), 1829–1896.
	Thomas Hardy, 1840–		
	John Henry Shorthouse, 1834–1903.		
	George Du Maurier, 1834–1896.		
	Mrs. Humphry Ward, 1851–		
	Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850–1894. (essayist, writer of verse).		



ELIZABETH GASKELL
1810-1866



Rudyard Kipling, 1865– (journalist, writer of verse).	Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, 1815–1881. (biographer, church historian).	Irish Land League, 1879.
	Thomas Huxley, 1825–1895. (philosopher, scientist).	John Tyndall (sci), 1820–1893.
	Henry Morley, 1822–1894. (biographer, historian of literature).	J. Whistler (p), 1834–1903.
	John Morley, 1838– (essayist).	Mr. Gladstone adopts Home Rule, 1885.
	Walter Pater, 1839–1894. (essayist, critic, writer of romance).	Betrayal and death of Gordon, 1885.
	Leslie Stephen, 1832–1904. (essayist, critic).	Queen's Jubilee, 1887.
	John Addington Symonds, 1840–1893. (essayist, literary historian).	Death of Gladstone, 1898.
	Andrew Lang, 1844–1912. (essayist, editor, writer of verse).	Boer War, 1900.
	Edward Dowden, 1843–1913. (critic, biographer).	Edward VII, accession, 1901.
		George V, accession, 1910.

1. Where an author has written in two or more of the literary forms here mentioned, his name will be found in that division where his work is strongest. The names are in the order in which important books appeared.

2. Sci = scientist.



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